ANGELA MORGAN'S RECITALS




H Ridgway

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Angela Morgan

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Angela Morgan's Recitals

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To

CHRISTINE N. WETHERILL

WHOSE LOYAL FRIENDSHIP AND CO-OPERATION
HAVE GIVEN FRESH STIMULUS TO MY WORK
AND A NEW SIGNIFICANCE TO LIFE,
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED



Foreword

Here is an unusual compilation of Angela Morgan's verse, which will come as a surprise to many of her readers, emphasizing those poems which lend themselves particularly to recitation. Here for the first time have been assembled the simple, human, straightforward verses which have so strong an appeal yet have been hitherto unknown to the public in book form. With the exception of eight poems, the contents of this volume are not to be found in any other book.

CONTENTS

Section I

BE FREE!

	PAGE
WOMEN, COME OUT!	3
WHY THIS HASTE?	4
THERE IS NO TIME	5
IF I COULD RISE SOME MORNING	6
FOLLOW THE SKY LINE	7
REVOLT IN SPRING	8
WHIZ AND WHINE	10
KEYS	11
BE RID OF THINGS	12
"FAMILY JUNK"	13
LIFE'S MERRY-GO-ROUND	15
REBELLION	16

Section II

BIRDS AND BEASTIES

A SONG OF TENDER THINGS	21
HORSES	22
CRUELTY	23
THE WASP	24
THE STOWAWAY	25

Section III

BEAUTY IS FOR ALL

BEAUTY IS FOR ALL	31
HAVE YOU THE PRICE?	31

PAGE

FRAGRANCE 32
"VANITY" 33
SHE WHOM YOU CALL "COMMON" 34
BE LOVELY! 35
A PRINCESS IN DISGUISE 36
THE GLOBE TROTTER 37

Section IV

COME ALONG TO CHEERFULNESS!

COME ALONG TO CHEERFULNESS! 41
TUNE UP TO JOY 42
THE BREAKFAST TRAY 43
THE EASTER HAT 43
GOD BLESS THE WORLD 44
I GREET MY HIGHER SELF 45
THE SMILE 46
SOON AFTER DARK 48
COURAGE FOR TO-DAY 49
YOUR BETTER SELF 50
SAY "I WILL" (TO DR. STEWART LEWIS) . . . 50
"NOT AFRAID" SONG 51
JOY OF LIFE 52

Section V

COUNTRY

FINDING PEACE 55
APRIL TREES 55
I GOT A WHIFF OF SPRING 56
COMFORT IN THE SKY 57
QUESTIONS IN SPRING 58
WELCOME TO SUMMER 59
ROSE GATHERING 59

PAGE
IF TREES COULD TALK 60
HONEYSUCKLE 61
SONG OF THE WHEAT 61
GOD THE ARTIST 62
EEL FLIES (ST. LAWRENCE RIVER) 64
VERMONT 65
HAYING TIME 66
PAINTIN' BLINDS (THE FARM HAND SPEAKS HIS MIND) 67
OGONTZ CAMP (AFTER TAPS) 69
THE CALL OF AUTUMN 70
THE MAN IN THE MOUNTAINS 71
THE FOREST FIRE 72
HER OPERA COAT 73
THE COLOR OF WINTER 74
WINTER SPORT 75
HOW RADIANT IS SNOW! 76

Section VI

DREAMS AND VISIONS

FIERY DREAMS 79
LADY OF DREAMS (TO MARTHA BERRY) 79
AMBITION OF THE STONES 82
SEA GULLS AND FERRY BOATS 83
AFTERNOON NAP 84
ALONE WITH THE STARS 85
MAY-TIME VISION 86
SANCTUARY (TRINITY CHURCH, SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS) 87
THE VISION PERFECT 88
SLEEP, THE RESTORER 89
THE PROPHET 89

Section VII

"EATS"

PAGE

THE BAKERY 93
PEACHES 94
"DINNER IS SERVED" (TO ETHEL) 95
TOAST 96
POTATOES 97
AT ANY COST! 98

Section VIII

GIRLS

GIRLS 103
PICTURES IN SUMMER 105
THE "FLAPPER" SPEAKS HER MIND 107
RINGING TRUE 108
BE THYSELF (FOR THE SENIOR CLASS OF THE OGONTZ SCHOOL, 1928) 108
THE VIEWPOINT (TWO MEN DISCUSS PRETTY GIRLS) 110
RAINBOW GIRLHOOD 111
BASQUES AND BONNETS 112
WHY GOD MADE GIRLS 113

Section IX

HOME

THE HOUSEWIFE'S HYMN 117
THE HEART'S CORNER 118
NO, I HAVE NOT READ IT! (CONFESSION OF A POET HOUSEKEEPER) 119
GIVE ROOM TO YOUTH 122
UNHAPPY HOMES 123
HAPPY SONG OF HOUSEWORK 124

PAGE
O WOMEN, TELL ME 125
A GUEST TO HER HOSTESS 126
THE HOUSEWIFE WAITS 126
WHEN MOTHER'S BAKING BREAD 127

Section X
HUMAN BEINGS

THE HUMAN TOUCH 131
SONG OF SUMMER DAYS 131
THE ICE MAN TRIES PSYCHOLOGY 132
"LOST AND FOUND" 134
THE SWIMMING LESSON 135
THE GAME OF LIFE 136
WHO COMES AROUND THE CORNER? 138
SOAP DISH PHILOSOPHY 139
LIKE HUMAN BEINGS (TREES AT NIGHT) . . . 141
THESE PEOPLE 142

Section XI
"KIDDIES"

SOME FOLKS SAY WE CAN'T REMEMBER 145
TO "EMMY LOU'S" PHOTOGRAPH 146
SECRET OF THE MOON 147
THE REASON 148
TO A WOMAN KNITTING (ON THE HOTEL VERANDA) . 150
SONG OF CLEANLINESS 151
CHILDREN IN THE PARK 152
DON'T CRY FOR THE MOON 153
GOD'S VELVET (THE THOUGHT OF A CHILD) . . 154
INFANT MAN (TO GEORGE BUCKLEY WARDER, THIRD) 155
NOW I KNOW! 156

Section XII

"LOVELY WOMAN"

PAGE

"LOVELY WOMAN" 161
SHOES IN THE MORNING 162
I LIKE TO DO EMBROIDERY 163
OBEYING ORDERS 164
A WOMAN BELOVED 165
IN THE GARDEN OF PEOPLE 166
CLOTHES 166
WOMEN'S FOOLISH FEET 167
THE BEAUTY SEEKERS 168
THE DOLL IN THE WINDOW 169
MILADY GOES SHOPPING 171
BEASTS OF BURDEN (NOT SO LONG AGO) 172
SHIPS OF THE WORLD 173
WOMEN WHO KNIT AND SEW 175

Section XIII

"LISTEN IN!"

"LISTEN IN!" 179
LET US HAVE FAITH! 179
YOU HAVE A MESSAGE TO GIVE 181
THE DOUBTERS 182

Section XIV

FRUSTRATION

THE MOTH IN THE INK BOTTLE 185
FRUSTRATION 185
LIFE WEANS HER CHILDREN 186
THWARTED SOULS 187
"FAILURE" 188
COURAGE 189

Section XV

"LET US BE BROTHERS!"

PAGE

"LET US BE BROTHERS!" (THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE) 193
TOLSTOI 193
THE ELEVATOR MAN 195
"GOD BE MERCIFUL" 196
INDIFFERENCE 196
FELLOW FEELING 197
VEILS 198
I SPEAK TO YOU 199
CHRISTMAS AFTER WAR 200
NOAH SAID 201
GOD DOES NOT WEEP 202
THE TEST OF FRIENDSHIP 203
YOUR NEIGHBOR'S HAPPINESS 203
THE GREATEST SIN 204

Section XVI

MEN AND WOMEN

THE COIN OF LIFE 209
THE GREAT DESIGN 209
WOMAN THE MYSTERY? 210
WHAT OF MY BOREDOM? 211
"TILL DEATH DO US PART" 213
WHEN THE CHILD SPEAKS 214
TWO TALK OF DAWN 218
ODIN, I WOULD ASK OF YOU 219
NOT TILL THEN 220
AN OLD MAN TO HIS WIFE 221
THE PRIME OF LIFE 222
THREE WOMEN 223

Section XVII

MOTHERS, SONS AND DAUGHTERS

PAGE

MOTHERS WITH LITTLE SONS 227
MOTHER AND DAUGHTER 228
THINGS I REMEMBER 230
HOW THE END CAME (THE STORY OF ONE MOTHER) 232
TO A HEEDLESS DAUGHTER 235
MOTHERS 236
DAUGHTERHOOD 237
TO A BRIDE'S MOTHER 238

Section XVIII

MONEY AND JEWELS

THE BROWN MARBLE 243
MONEY 243
JEWELS 245
A SONG OF FLOWING GOLD 246

Section XIX

MASTERY

MASTERY 251
"MAN TRIUMPHANT" 252
RED SPIRITED 252
THE KING 253
WHICH OF THESE THREE? 254
MAN THE DELIVERER 255
THE APPETITE FOR RIGHT 256
BE GLAD OF ARDOR 257

Section XX

"NEW WORLD"

SONG OF THE NEW WORLD 261
THE GOD THAT I LOVE 262

PAGE
THE SELF SUPREME 263
THE NEW GOSPEL 264
THE MEANING OF THE AGE 265
SONG OF NEW DAYS 267
FORWARD! 267
GREATNESS 268

Section XXI

LOVE

THE CHOOSING 273
A YOUTH TO HIS MAIDEN 273
LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT 274
STARLIGHT AND SYRINGAS 274
LOVE IN SPRING 276
THE CRY ETERNAL 277
CONFIRMATION 278
LOVE DEFIANT 278
THE CHANCE TO LOVE 279
LOVERS BY THE RIVER 280
MY HEART'S HAVEN 280
LOVE 281
THE GARDEN IN THE SKY 281
ONE ONLY 282
A LOVER SINGS OF LILIES 283
"SPOONING" 283
PETALS (A LOVE STORY) 285
CONSOLATION 286
LOVE'S RESURRECTION 286
RECONCILIATION 287
LOVE VICTORIOUS 287
LOVE'S ORDERS 288

Section XXII

TOWN

PAGE

I AM GLAD OF THE CITY 293
JOURNEYS 293
THE SOUL OF THE CITY 295
THE STEAM SHOVEL 296
THE CITY CHILD IN SUMMER 296
THE LUNGS OF THE CITY 297
CITY, REPLY! 298

Section XXIII

WORK AND TRIUMPH

WE NEED OUR TASKS 303
A CALL TO GENIUS 304
WORK: A SONG OF TRIUMPH 305
BEHOLD, MY KINGS! 306

Section I

BE FREE!

WOMEN, COME OUT!

Out to the village green I went
And thanked the Maker of all good
That He so lavishly had spent
His love upon the Maytime brood
Of birds and blooms and everything
That wakens with the surge of Spring.
I thought to find upon my way
Maidens and mothers everywhere
Taking the tonic of the air,
Glad for the glory of this day.
But all was solemn in that street,
Hushed as the dim aisles of the dead;
Nor sounded any waking tread
Of rapturous, rejoicing feet.

I stared in wonder. Shuttered tight
Stood little houses, hemmed with green;
Blinds closely drawn against the light,
No moving presence could be seen.
And then . . . I looked! Behind the pane
Where the glad sunshine beat in vain
A woman, robbed of youth and grace,
Was toiling in that dreary place.
Turbaned with towels, apron clad,
Two younger women scrubbed and scoured,
Nor saw how lilac bushes flowered. . . .
For this was all the joy they had!
I thought of towns where humankind
Welter and die, and never taste
The healing tide of Summer's blue;
And a great sadness swept me through
That all this loveliness should waste.

Women, come out! Leave stupid tasks undone.
Fly from the prison walls that hem you in.
Answer the godly challenge of the sun,
And a new life begin.
Women, come out, and see Spring's gorgeous coat,
Fluted and ruffled, fringed with fairy lace;
Look how she gayly ties it at the throat,
And pulls a gauzy veil about her face. . . .
O women! You will never find such jewels anywhere;
No city shop has ever shown such rich brocade. . . .
See where the sun pours amber over there,
Where hills are soft as jade.
Women, come out! Have homely tasks more worth
Than mothering a splendid race to be?
How shall weak women bring great sons to birth?
O mothers of mankind, come forth! Be free!

WHY THIS HASTE?

Why this haste, why this fever?
Why this panting and distress?
Hurry is a sad deceiver
Though a million duties press.
In the darkness, all unknowing,
Lo, the infant seed is growing.
Softly, softly, without pain
See it lift its golden grain.
What your woes, what your losses?
Nature cries, "Come with me!
Watch my rhythm over mosses
In the pools beneath the tree . . .
Cease your silly, vain explosion!
Watch my steady, calm erosion;
See my pebbles, how they ride
Through my centuries of tide!"

Why this haste, why this worry?
Nature says, "Learn of me!
Cease your fume and fret and flurry . . .
Look and see, look and see!"

THERE IS NO TIME

There is no time!
You who are frenzied by the day's demands
Or paralyzed to find your purpose unfulfilled,
Though swift you toil with faithful, eager hands,
Seeing the years of effort that shall make you skilled;
You who are panic-stricken or dismayed
By the increasing clamor of the hour—
Oh, let your fevered energies be stayed,
Come forth into a higher realm of power!

Swing out into the wide, clear atmosphere
Where human will and human purpose chime
With universal Law; where every year
And every blazing moment are as one;
Where neither checks nor limits on the spirit's calendar
Shall hold you from the work you have begun.
Go forth, go forth as swings the morning star!

Let no man say:
"Unless good fortune come to you to-day,
Life's precious opportunities are yours no more."
Oh, take this truth and clasp it to your heart:
All hours are God's, all moments are athrill
If you but know your yearnings as a part
Of Love's creative will.
Once let your being soar
Beyond the barricade that man has set;
Once let your soul forget

The crowded panic of an hour's embrace,
And all your toil shall measure to the rhythm
Of mighty suns in space,
No longer prisoned in the moment's span —
This mortal barrier of age and clime.
Oh, know to-day, whoever you may be,
You are the master of Eternity. . . .
There is no time!

IF I COULD RISE SOME MORNING

If I could rise some morning,
From every fear set free,
Despite my neighbor's warning
Trust those who deal with me;

If you could face the universe
With laughter in your eye,
Nor lock your door nor hide your purse
Because of passers-by;

If all of us who now are thrust
With doubting as a sword
Could find a sudden way to trust
Our fellows and the Lord —

What happiness would thrill the world,
What beauty for the blind,
What hidden powers be unfurled
For all of humankind!

Oh, why should I and why should you
And all we mortal folk
Make life a prison as we do
And fortune but a yoke?

If God has made of one degree
All people 'neath the blue,
Why, neighbor, are you doubting me,
And why should I doubt you?

FOLLOW THE SKY LINE

Follow, follow the sky line
And you'll not be stumbling long.
Just raise your eyes
To the glittering skies
Where the starry light is strong.
If the stars are out
No need to doubt,
But hold to the line you see —
Just follow the sky line,
Look to the high line,
Follow it constantly!

Follow, follow the sky line
As you lug your human load.
If your path you'd keep
Where the ruts are deep
In the rude and inky road,
Just follow the line
Of the friendly hill
Where the rows of pine
Stand straight and still;
Just lift your head and follow on —
Follow till you find the dawn!

Follow, follow the sky line
If your destiny you'd greet.
Just look on high
Till you find the sky
Where the topmost branches meet.

Though the rain be pouring
And the brook be roaring,
Don't lend to the dark your glance;
Don't fear the hollow
But follow, follow,
Follow to the day's advance.

Follow, follow the sky line,
When your fate seems inky black.
If your goal you'd greet
Just govern your feet
By the silver-gleaming track.
Though you trudge alone
You will find your own
By hewing to the light above;
Just follow the sky line,
Look to the high line
Gleaming on the hills of love!

REVOLT IN SPRING

Just to be free one day!
Just to pursue my own and not another's way;
Not to be forced to buy an Easter gown
Or haunt the mad shop windows of the town.
Just to go forth and bravely challenge Fate,
Whether my hair be curled or stringing straight,
Whether my skirt be measured short or long,
Whether my cape be swinging right or wrong —
No matter what is wrong or right with me,
Just to be free!

Oh, to be free one day,
Callous and deaf to what the " others " say!
To ramble where I will, without my hat,
Immune from calls and letters and all that,

Immune from stiff conventions that would take
All glory out of life, for duty's sake;
To snap my fingers in the clock's round face,
And leisurely to keep the spirit's pace —
No rigid persons whom I might offend
If thus it happens that I don't " attend " !

I know a dusty attic where I'd go
And browse among my papers, row on row,
And dust my books, examine everything,
And let the old dreams quicken to the Spring.
I know a set of closet shelves that hold
My heart's own treasure house of waiting gold.
Oh, could I harvest all my deeds begun!
Oh, could I gather yet what lies undone!
Oh, could I claim the time to be that self
Which lies unfinished on my closet shelf!
Just to be free one hour to choose my day,
To go my own and not another's way;
Just to come out from 'neath the iron hand
And take the course no other soul has planned.

You see, I have a cherished little scheme
For filing all my papers, ream on ream;
And searching all the crannies and the nooks
For diaries and memorandum books . . .
But oh, there goes the telephone again!
I quite forgot the world of living men.
And tea's at four, and after that the play,
With plans a-plenty for the coming day.
Oh, won't some Titan soul proclaim to me
How to be free!

WHIZ AND WHINE

Oh, it's the whine of life that tells —
 The tease, the fret, the hurry;
Not the great burdens or the pain,
 But just the eternal worry.

Oh, it's the whiz of life that wears
 Its way within the soul —
Not the sad load the spirit bears,
 Nor striving for a goal.

It's not the moment when we learn
 Fortune is swept from under;
It's not the hour when sorrows burn
 Their way to hidden wonder.

It's just the friction and the stress,
 The struggle to be on time,
The daily tyranny of dress,
 The bickering over a dime.

The pull of other wills on ours,
 The battle to maintain
Amid the surge of other powers
 A purpose not in vain.

Oh, strange how punctuality
 Should hold a worth so high
That rather than offend — well, we
 Would lay us down and die!

What tyrannies we bow before,
 What foolish rules we make —
Oh, let us seek a vine-hung door,
 Be free, for beauty's sake!

KEYS

The crying ill, the great disease
Of modern life, is too many keys!
Too many keys, too many locks,
Too much worry with bonds and stocks;
Too little time for simple pleasure,
Too much bother with weights and measure,
Too many fears, too many ways
To spoil the glory of summer days.

"Sorry, my friend, I'd walk with you,
But I'm just crowded with things to do.
Taxes, insurance, pension — well!
You know them all. No need to tell."
Too many locks, too many keys,
Few of us free to do as we please,
Fretted with fear and dark with suspicion,
Life is an orgy of inhibition.

Of course, if you are the best of wives,
Bridget must surely count the knives
And label the boxes, every one —
You can't go out till the deed is done.
"Now hide the keys where I told you to —
Oh, dear! Such hundreds of things to do!"
Too many bars against our brother,
Too little knowledge of one another.

Material things are the great disease,
Too many trunks and closet keys,
Too many banks and too many vaults —
These are the biggest of modern faults.
Too many bars that could well be rusting,
Everyone doubting, nobody trusting,
Too many prisons to foster crime. . . .
Horrible waste of strength and time!

Too many rules that are ironclad,
Too much saying that folks are bad,
Too many bolts on the human mind
Earnestly seeking the Truth to find.
Oh, who shall cure us of our confusion?
Who shall conquer the great delusion?
Who shall open a fearless door:
"Come, kin of mine! We are friends once more."

BE RID OF THINGS

Be rid of things!
If you would find your wings,
If you would live in freedom and be whole,
Destroy the nettles that disturb the soul
And clear the universe of fretful stings —
Be rid of things!

Strange is the frenzy of the will to gain
Those burdens that must bring a later pain.
Mad is the man who to his own dismay
Amasses what his reason flings away.
How can the mind live cheerfully its best
Within a hornet's nest?
More lives are hurt by hoarding useless things
Than by the losses dread disaster brings.

Why should we hold this carnival of greed,
Loading the life beyond its simple need?
Why should the soul be servant of the clay,
Entangled in the trash of every day?
Go, sweep the cluttered corners and be glad;
Sigh not for any treasured thing you had.

Give to the poor the garments put away,
Stored needlessly against a rainy day.
Better to strip the shelves and closets clean
Than smother in a selfishness so mean.
Let not the cares of earth destroy your wings —
Be rid of things!

"FAMILY JUNK"

I always say,
When the time comes to give things away:
"No pleas or plaints shall stop me.
None shall tell me no.
This mass of useless things has got to go!
These frightful odds and ends that take up space
And draw the dust and stare us in the face
From every closet shelf and box and trunk —
Old hats and belts and ties and general junk —
I'll heave them out before the close of day.
I'll end this reign of trifles, come what may!"

And then . . . familiar voices on the stair:
"For gracious sakes, what are you doing there?
Hold on! I bought that piece of silk to mend
Aunt Jennie's coat. No, no, don't touch that braid!
It took me weeks and weeks to find the shade
To go with Ella's jacket. Mercy, look!
See what you're doing with that precious book. . . .
I wouldn't lose it for the king's crown;
It's got the baby's sayings jotted down!"

"Look here! Those shoes are mine, I tell you — mine!"
"Oh, what extravagance to waste that twine.
We need it every day to tie things up —
Oh, dear, you've got my little souvenir cup!

It's broken — yes, I know. But don't you see,
It's doubly dear and comforting to me?" . . .
"There's Uncle Alfred's coat. Before he died
He called his loved children to his side,
And mother said she'd always treasure that!
Oh, here's a pair of gloves, and here's his hat . . . "

My indignation flares. I cry aloud,
Enough to stir my uncle in his shroud:
"You really think an angel with new wings
Is occupied with such material things?
You honestly believe" . . . "Well, throw it out!"
And then another fierce protesting shout:
"Don't! Don't destroy that frame! Can't you remember?
The Thompsons sent it to us last December!"

I always say,
When the time comes to give old things away:
"Nothing shall move me from the appointed task.
No answers will I give, nor questions ask.
But grimly as an executioner
I'll do away with trinkets, beads and fur;
With bonings and with linings, hooks and stays
That have no bearing on our modern days.
I'll take the tangled mass of picture wire
And fling the wreckage in the furnace fire.
The Christmas cards of twenty years ago
I'll burn with glee, and none shall tell me no!"

But oh, to-day, I find them with me still:
The shawl strap which no word of mine may kill;
The roll of velvet kept since eighteen-five;
The treasured muff where moths are yet alive;
The old forgotten gaiter tops, too small;
A feathered cape, a faded little shawl;
And boxes cluttered up with pens and glue
And broken pencils that would never do.

And clippings, clippings, clippings without end,
And picture postals from a faithful friend.
A coat I started twice to give away. . . .
All these, all these my treasures are to-day.

Some day a ruthless course I will pursue,
When all the family their slumbers take.
At two o'clock or thereabouts, I'll wake,
And quietly my plans shall all come true.
Oh, blissful burglary, oh, dream fulfilled,
Oh, gladsome hours with ripe achievement thrilled!
To gaze at last in every empty trunk
And know the house is cleared of family junk!

LIFE'S MERRY-GO-ROUND

The music roars, the horses prance,
Our whirling days are but a dance
Of dizzy figures flying round,
On folly bent, for pleasure bound.
And over us the stars must say,
"How strange that men should live that way!"

With eager shout and ringing laugh,
On camel, goat, or staid giraffe,
We mount the seat and grip the rein
Mid frantic hoof and tossing mane.
We soar, we sing, we gasp, we scream,
For flying's such a happy dream!

Our jolly steeds move fast and faster,
Foolish hobbies made of plaster,
Steeds that have no real existence—
These we urge with strange persistence.
While above, the massive night
Ponders on our giddy flight.

The music roars, the years advance;
On our hobbies still we prance,
Madly envying our neighbor,
Still we struggle, still we labor.
Houses, lands, and plenteous gold,
Like our neighbor we must hold,

Yachts and motors, jewels bright,
Boxes on the opening night;
" Social honors," " brilliant catch,"
Daughter makes a " stunning match,"
And the stars are thrilled with mirth,
Gazing on the foolish earth.

Mount your horses! Have your fun
Till the useless game is done,
Till your sickened soul is crying
For another sort of flying,
And you turn your deafened ears
To the music of the spheres.

Then the final, great surprise
When you rub your waking eyes,
Going forth amazed and free
Under skies you did not see,
Under stars you did not know
In the light that dazzled so!

REBELLION

I cannot come within the cramped and cruel limits
That make up life for others. Give me room!
Oh, give me space to breathe and think and feel
Beyond the walls of this imprisoning doom,
This armor clamping me from head to heel,

Inheritance of ages long since dead.
My thoughts need room to spread,
To soar beyond the fetters of this gate
Where slow opinions wait
And little minds make measures for the strong.
Oh, I am sick and weary of this wrong,
Impatient of the patient ones who bear
Too meekly what the stupid fates have wrought.
No longer may my fiery spirit share
The comradeship of serfs so cheaply bought.
Oh, I shall shatter every bond, and be
As God intended when He shaped my goal . . .
For he alone is virtuous and free
Who names no man the master of his soul!

Section II

BIRDS AND BEASTIES

The little, lapping, loving things,
How tenderly they lie,
Their bodies sacred to the sun
And mothered by the sky;
The gentle, purring, pretty things
With delicate, dear breast —
The kitten on the window ledge,
The squirrel in his nest —
The little, glossy, trembling things
With whimpering soft cries,
I see God look at me sometimes
Out of their limpid eyes.
And often in the twilight hush
I think I hear Him speak
Through fragile, frightened, furry things
That are so greatly weak.

The tiny, tender birdling things,
How wondrously they fly,
The flutter of God's happiness,
The laughter in His eye.
And all the bubbles of bright song
Flung from a thousand throats —
The bobolink's, the meadow lark's,
The thrush's liquid notes;
Oh, fields of buttercups are there —
Or so the story's told —
To catch the shower of sweet song
In chalices of gold.
The little, darting, chirping things
With downy wings and sweet,
I think they chatter oft of us
Who trudge with mortal feet,
And wonder why we seldom sing
And still more seldom play;

The rhythms of eternity
Flow through them all the day.

O Life, that leaps within them all,
Mysterious and fine,
Thou hast a myriad shapes of light
Within this world of thine;
The stars, the flowers, the roads, the hills,
People and rocks and trees —
Thou hast a host of children, Life,
But none so dear as these.

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HORSES

Horses dusty and dumb, plodding the country road,
What are you feeling, what are you thinking
While you drag your load?
Horses waiting at the curbs along the busy street,
What is the word your eyes are saying
When our glances meet?
I pause to give a pat or smile,
Perchance to talk with you awhile,
And something deep within your gaze —
A look that strikes me with amaze —
Leaps up and seems to say to me
That you, though dumb, have minds as we.

Horses draggled and meek;
Horses clever and sleek;
Plumed prancing circus beauties
In the street parade;
High-stepping satin creatures gloriously made.
Horses pedigreed and slim,
Velvet-muzzled, smooth of limb,

Owned and loved by sons of earth
Whose millions cannot match your birth . . .
Watching you, I ask again
Just how near you are to men?
Do you sense the world as they,
Can you see the poplars sway?
Know you how the rivers run,
Mad with diamonds in the sun?
Do you, can you, feel as I
The curve and color of the sky?

Common pack horses with their heads held down—
Often I have looked at them dragging through the town.
Fat, brisk horses that the butcher boys drive,
Heavy truck horses that noisily arrive
Early in the dawning when the cobblestones repeat
Cannonade of ash cans pounding through the street;
Clattering of sturdy hoofs through the stillness hurled,
Early in the dawning, waking up the world.
Then I lie awake and wonder,
Cradled by the traffic thunder,
Are they only brutes indeed
Who minister to human need?
Human longings they must share . . .
Just how far are they aware?

CRUELTY

Why did you kill the bird?
It had so sweet a word,
It only asked to sing
And spread its lovely wing.
Look how the tender throat
That held so rare a note
Has suddenly grown still.
Why, why did you kill?

Why did you scold to-day
The little child at play?
It had no harm for you . . .
Its bubbling heart was true.
Why did you bring to grief
A happiness too brief?
Joy is the fairest thing
That life or death may bring.

Why did you hurt the friend
Who loved you to the end?
Why did you send the dart
Which pierced that loyal heart?
Words have so keen a sting,
Such ruthless suffering.
Love has the largest worth
Of any gift on earth.

O lovers, false or true . . .
O foolish hearts and blind,
One thing life asks of you . . .
Be kind, be kind!

THE WASP

The wasp flew round and round the enticing hole
In the window frame,
As if he said to himself:
"There's a good site for a home. I'll build."
Darted close, on a tour of inspection,
Cavorted about,
Stuck his head in the hole, pulled it out,
And then, with the way of wasps, was suddenly gone
While his audience looked on.

"How quickly he is discouraged, even as men. . . .
He'll not come back again!"
No sooner thought, than I looked high up to see
The swift wings over me
In wider and yet wider circles flying,
As if this young adventurer were trying
To gain a finer ardor, a new will,
Fiercer momentum still.
True! He came winging back
For another brave attack.

Well, little wasp, I'll own
It takes grit for the corner stone.
Once the foundation's laid
The future's as good as made. . . .
I, who would also do
Constructive things like you,
Shall try again and yet again shall try;
A wasp shall not be pluckier than I!

THE STOWAWAY

The worm looked up and bowed to me
Out of his hole in the straw-ber-ree.
The waiter had said they were fresh, you see —
"The best of the season, sir," said he —
But there was the worm in the straw-ber-ree.

"I'll call that waiter at once!" said I.
But the worm spoke up with a startled cry:
"Oh, save me, sir! It is hard to die. . . .
My life is sweet as the moments fly!"
"Too sweet entirely," was my reply,
"I'll hail the waiter as he goes by."

The worm looked up from the straw-ber-ree —
A trim and a tidy worm was he —
He had no tongue that I could see,
No lips to murmur like you and me,
And yet with a certain dignity
He said his say from the straw-ber-ree.

Thus did the plucky worm rehearse
His ups and downs in the universe:
"I live my life, I bear my curse,
I struggle daily from wrong to worse.
I own no lands, I have no purse,
No friends for me their goods disburse.

"Why should you humans hate me so?
I have no shelter, no place to go.
No hearth, no bed, no home," said he,
"And so I hid in the straw-ber-ree,
The straw-ber-ree, the straw-ber-ree.
And so I hid in the straw-ber-ree."

"Truly I can't imagine why
We hate you so," I made reply,
"Nor why we hanker to see you die.
You seem as humble and meek as pie.
You live your best — at least you try —
But you are low, and we are high!"
"Ah, that's the point!" came the bitter cry.

As scorn upflashes and lightning springs,
So now the worm with his answerings;
His words were thorned with a hundred stings:
"Though worms are classed with the lowest things,
It seems that mortals are less than kings
And far from finding their angel wings!

"It seems that mortals are still the prey
Of sin and terror from day to day,
And wars and miseries have their say,
And famine follows along the way.
Whose words may help, whose hand may stay,
Whose God will answer when mortals pray?

"Oh, all are dupes and slaves like me!
Where is the king of men?" quoth he
Who mocked at me from the straw-ber-ree.
"Ah, who shall found a philosophy
To rescue worms like you and me. . . .
A spokesman for humanity?

"Not till you mortals gain control
Of the planet earth from pole to pole,
Have you the right to scorn my hole.
I have no mind, I have no soul?
But you who claim the rounded whole —
Why have *you* fallen from your goal?"

"There, little worm," said I, "go to!
I have no hate or harm for you."
The worm looked up and bowed to me.
He had no tongue that I could see,
And yet he spoke with dignity
From out his hole in the straw-ber-ree.

The worm looked up and bowed to me
And this is what he vowed to me:
"You spared my life and I shall be
A nobler worm from now," said he.
"Already I begin to see
Some hope for your humanity!"

Section III

BEAUTY IS FOR ALL

BEAUTY IS FOR ALL

Why should you curl the lip and say:
"My neighbor's dress is far too gay;
She has no income such as I!
The poor in purse may never buy
What richer pockets can procure,
And humble persons should endure
With patience what their lot provides —
Content where common thrift abides."

Why should the artist glibly say:
"For *you* the dull mechanic's way;
For *me* the thrill of golden lore,
The gifts of lovers gone before.
For you the labor and the dust,
The grind of life, because you must.
For me, the draught of Beauty's wine —
The ancient treasures all are mine."

Why should we think or say it, then?
"These are the common working men;
There are the flowers, here the clods;
These are but clay, and these are gods."
Oh, we shall all our words revise
When we have made our thinking wise.
They, too, are answering God's call —
Beauty is for all!

HAVE YOU THE PRICE?

Man-made things must be paid for,
God's gifts are free and kind;
The woodland road, the lake, the hills,
Mountains and dew and wind.

The poor man stands at the doorway
To take a peep at the show,
But God asks never a penny
For stars or sunset glow.

The widow with children starving
Must labor or ask for bread,
But God puts never a price at all
On the universe outspread.

Go, take your fill of the moonrise,
Or the lily's fragrance deep,
For these are the gifts that tarnish not,
These are the goods that keep!

FRAGRANCE

When I inhale a carnation,
I find the living essence of that bloom,
A fine, pervasive presence in my room,
So faintly odorous, and yet so sharply sweet,
So near me, yet so fleet,
That while I hail the presence, it is gone . . .
And that is but a scentless bloom I look upon.

When I above a hyacinth explore
The perfumed chambers of her hidden lore,
A throng of sweet voluptuous beauties rise—
A thick, enchanting vapor to my eyes;
A swarm of temptresses in silken gauze
Who dance in tune to fairyland's applause . . .
And even when their loveliness has fled,
Their perfume leaves a hood about my head.

When I the scent of apple trees inhale,
The orchard seems a blowing bridal veil
And earth a maiden freshly wooed and fair,
With braids of sunlight for her glittering hair.
For perfume is a presence, like the wind,
And swift is he who falleth not behind . . .
But oh, when I inhale a rose,
The ecstasy of all the universe within me flows!

"VANITY"

Say not 'tis vanity, when human art
Would make the body worthy of the heart.
Say not 'tis foolishness or cheap display
When love would seek to beautify the clay.
Behind each impulse that would bring to sight
A greater loveliness, a keener light;
Back of the wish for beauty, understood,
Burns the deep Purpose of immortal good.

Say not 'tis vanity, when Art would bring
To Nature's gift her added offering.
Nor when the glowing spirit strives to make
The flesh more luminous, for beauty's sake.
God, who has made a pansy like a queen,
And placed the lily on a throne of green;
God, who has fringed the daisy's lovely coat
And put a string of pearls about her throat —

God, who has fashioned every little herb
And meadow blossom with a skill superb —
How can He look with favor on His race
Unless, like these, we show a goodly grace?

I think sometimes the kind Creator sighs
To see how lagging flesh His will denies.
Say not 'tis vanity! But look abroad
Where smile the living witnesses of God.
O women, be as lovely as you dare —
As fragrant as the rose is, and as fair!
O men, be clean and handsome, strong and fine,
That God may call His handiwork divine!

SHE WHOM YOU CALL "COMMON"

She whom you call "common" — (the lace at her throat,
her beads and display,
"How hopeless, how tawdry!" you say) —
Do you know that her finery glows with a wonderful
sheen,
With a beauty unknown to your ladies of loftier birth?
Do you know that the jewels ablaze on the breast of a
queen
Are no grander than hers, who has paid but a coin for
their worth?
Well, stare with disdain, if you will. Be as proud as you
may;
Shrug your shoulders and laugh at her cheap little bauble
of glass;
But oh, had *you* struggled and slaved for a watch at your
wrist,
You wouldn't be sneering the joy of the woman you
pass —
Who knows but she's smiling to think of the rapture
you've missed?

She whom you call "common" — (her feathers, her fringe,
her gay little hat,
"*Who would ever have dressed her like that!*") —

Do you know that the spark in her soul is as sweet as your own
When you choose your attire with impeccable wisdom and care?
There's a zest and a glory within that you never have known,
And the Dream in her breast is as fair as your jewels are fair.
While she toiled at the tub or the table, the desk or the loom,
She had eyes for a Vision ahead that was white as a star;
For the passion of Beauty was bright in that poor little room,
And I care not how tawdry you tell me her necklaces are.
Oh, say what you will of her hat or her shoes or her belt,
She's as splendid and joyous and fine as a creature could be.
You would barter the world, could you feel as this woman has felt,
And I wish in my heart we could all be as happy as she!

BE LOVELY!

Oh, Nature would say if she could:
"Be lovely as well as good!
Shall poppy and lilac and rose
Snare all of the beauty that grows?
Shall tulips like wishes of God
Thrust scarlet and gold through the sod,
Shall the shrub and the lily be fair
And woman have naught to compare?"

But the stupid ones outside
Who prate of sin and pride
Would call it vain and silly
To emulate the lily,

Would think her "vulgar" who
Would dress as poppies do.
The stupid ones . . . why, they
Would shake their heads and say:
"The world is growing worse—
God help this universe!"

A PRINCESS IN DISGUISE

Whenever through the din of life
I hear some lordly name
Resounding on the lips of men
Who value rank and fame,
And when in wild solicitude
Throngs gather just to see
The passing feather of a prince
Or princess, as may be,
I mind me how when but a child
I gazed in hurt surprise
When in the streets I saw the crowds
And heard their servile cries.

And when one asked me laughingly
Why stood I thus alone,
And had I, then, no reverence
For scepter or for throne?
Seldom the sight of majesty
Was granted folks to see.
And was I dull, or was I blind,
Or what was wrong with me?

I mind me how a spark flew up
And filled my brain with light,
And how I felt through all my frame
A surging sense of might.

And how I said: "What care have I
For crowns that money buys,
When I am royal of myself —
A princess in disguise?"

"Indeed!" my mates called laughingly.
"Pray, when hath come this fame?
Fair lady, tell us where your throne
And what your royal name."
"I have no name except my own,
No throne beneath the sun,
But I am royal, as are you,
My playmates, every one."

I smile again, remembering
My comrades' blank dismay,
And yet the words my childhood spoke —
How true they ring to-day!
For every man a prince is,
If folks were truly seen;
A princess, too, is every maid,
And every woman queen.

And you who read these pages,
Whether young or old and wise,
You know that you are prince
Or maybe princess in disguise!

THE GLOBE TROTTER

The thunder that is London
Has sent my thoughts to sea,
And weaned me from the hearth and home
Where I was wont to be.

The witchery of Italy,
The sorcery of Spain,
Have torn me from my sheltered nook,
Have shattered every chain.

I freeze in far Siberia,
I sun my soul in France,
I yearn for danger and delight,
For peril and romance.
Oh, I who once was calm and smug,
A small contented man,
Would know the breadth of India,
Of China and Japan.

Too long the narrow-minded rule,
The insular content
Have kept me tethered to the spot
Where boyhood's years were spent.
But now my wishes run and run
Like banners bright unfurled,
For I would be a citizen
And friend of all the world!

Section IV

Come Along To Cheerfulness

COME ALONG TO CHEERFULNESS

Let us come along to cheerfulness,
Come along to a vigorous contentment,
Bringing our warped shoes and unbecoming hats and all the other grievances
Close to the throne of Universal Goodwardness!

Whether or no the tailor erred in the fitting of our coat sleeves;
Whether or no the dentist dragged us through pain, for naught;
Whether or no our coal bill staggers us with keen fears of the future —
Even if all the angry imps are tugging at our hungry cells
For want of appetizing things to eat —
Let us come along to cheerfulness,
Come along to a high and wholesome courage.

The little things, the hornet things, most vex and try us —
The unjust word, the fancied slight, the lifted brows,
The sneer, the edged rebuke —
(More irritating, even, than shoes that let our arches down,
More haunting still than piled-up letters and bills yet to be paid) —
Let us, even so, come along to cheerfulness,
Brace up to righteousness,
Keep our chins level with the sunrise,
Mustering new hopes, fresh plans, new dreams and longings,
For after all, these terrifying ills
Are but momentary mosquitos
Humming thinly amid the organ music of the Eternities!

TUNE UP TO JOY

This one thing bear forever in thy mind
When days are dull and rapture hard to find:
The joy that once was thine is still the same,
Thou may'st recapture the immortal flame.
The goad, the zest, the agony, the zeal
For labor and for loving, thou shalt feel.
Once more shall Beauty knock upon thy door,
And thou shalt love as thou hast loved before.

But this, oh, this bear ever in thy heart —
'Tis we ourselves from happiness depart,
Not happiness from us; for it is we
Who fall below her high enraptured key.
For seldom do we tune ourselves to sing
In harmony with Heaven's answering,
Nor would we pay the price of pain and stress
Along the road that leads to happiness.

Oh, joy's a hill whereto our hearts we turn;
A mountain where eternal beauties burn;
A sky where plumes of white forever spray
Across the incandescence of the day.
And could we compass it with human eyes
Our days would flower with a vast surprise . . .
For we are travelers who may at will
Climb daily to the summit of that hill.

Oh, joy's a song, a lovely golden tune. . . .
We hear it mostly in the month of June,
Yet June will pass, with whirling robes of heat,
And Winter come, to find the music sweet.
Tune up, tune up to joy, nor ask of her
Beseechingly, some favor to confer.
Tune up, tune up the dull unlistening ear
And thou shalt find thy Paradise is here!

THE BREAKFAST TRAY

A creamy tulip, touched with pink,
 Smiling upon a breakfast tray,
May snatch my spirit from the brink
 And turn life's tragedy away.
A bud with edges quaintly curled,
 A fern with fringes thin as thread,
Showing the Hand that shaped the world,
 May lift my courage from the dead!



THE EASTER HAT

Because I may not show my grief to him,
I shall buy me a red hat with a ruffly brim.
I shall buy me a hat so delicate, sweet and gay
That none shall dream of the sorrow tucked away. . . .
For April comes, though sundered hearts may cry,
And April dons her flowers . . . why not I?

I shall buy me a rosy hat and a foolish gown,
I shall link my soul with the glad soul of the town,
And you who have thought me sad shall see me gay,
And you who have deemed me wise shall likely say:
"Alas, how soon is wisdom swept aside!"
But I shall answer nothing in my pride.

For April answers not, except to show
Her shining Easter blossoms, row on row;
Her careless crystal brooks that whir and sing,
Her satin touch on every lifted wing. . . .
Though men are dying and though women die,
She dons her lovely garments . . . why not I?

I dance and sing in spite of the world's woe,
And you who judge me now shall never know

'Twas just because I bore the earth's distress
I bought me a red hat and a silver dress. . . .
My soul grown sickly with the world's dismay,
I fled to April, that I might be gay!

GOD BLESS THE WORLD

God bless the world this morning,
 God bless the world, I say!
My grief has taken warning
 And thrown her shroud away.
My woe is now a wingèd thing
 Of iridescent gauze . . .
She cannot harm me any more,
 She has no further cause.

I smiled upon my enemy —
 I could but catch her eye —
I wished that I might take her hand,
 She went too swiftly by.
But such a glow was in my heart,
 I feel it's come to stay . . .
God bless the world this morning,
 God bless the world, I say!

The frost is on the window ledge,
 The fire is in the grate;
The moments have a sparkling edge,
 A joy that cannot wait.
I've had a letter from my love
 And love is on the way . . .
God bless the world this morning,
 God bless the world, I say!

I GREET MY HIGHER SELF

I greet my Higher Self this day,
I'm friendly with the sun,
I've found a shining word to say,
With lesser things I'm done.

Oh, early in the dawn I seemed
My Higher Self to find . . .
Nor was it like a dream I dreamed,
But knowledge for my mind.

A sudden, bright conviction, clear
As any sounding bell . . .
I knew my Higher Self was near,
I heard that all was well.

I greet my Higher Self this day,
I stand above the brim
Where dust and sorrow choke the way
And make my purpose dim.

My Higher Self bends low to speak,
I lift my head to hear:
"My strength is yours, when you are weak —
Ask me, and I appear.

"Behold my hands, that clasp your own,
Of lightning they are made;
Oh, never shall you walk alone —
My child, be not afraid!"

I take my task and do my part
To-day as yesterday,
But oh, what singing in my heart,
What fire to light the way!

I stand above the toil and doubt,
The heaviness and sinning;
I'm glad within and glad without . . .
I've made a new beginning!

THE SMILE

It was the tag end of an irritating day.
The impudent March wind blew dust in my face,
Whirled trash and torn papers through the streets,
Challenged poise and patience,
Set people's nerves on edge.
The hours had been snagged with interruptions;
Nothing I had begun was finished.
Life was a piece of goods torn crisscross,
With every thread crying out of place.

Most of the clerks were tired and indifferent,
Besieged by mobs of worried customers
Demanding immediate attention and courtesy
At almost closing time.
I bought a piece of goods I did not like,
Matched it with trimming from the ribbon counter,
And sighed as the yawning sales girl
Handed me my change and parcel.
I could not blame her . . .
Nor could I blame myself.
Things were askew. The world was out of tune.
These purchases . . . sheer waste!

The clock said half-past five,
Lacking three paltry minutes.
Suddenly I remembered!
My aunt was waiting at a near-by shoe store,
Expecting me to meet her most punctually,
Before the shop should close.
She was elderly, she was exacting.
This very moment, doubtless, she was fretting needlessly,
Believing some accident had befallen me.
Out in the street again, wind-harried,
I pushed my way through mobs and mobs
Of shoving, elbowing, ruthless people,
Reached at last the appointed shoe store,
To find the blinds down and the door firmly closed.

There is no sight on earth or under it more final,
More disheartening, more reproachful,
Than that of a door just closed,
Seeming to say, with its blank, relentless countenance,
"One moment earlier, O delinquent,
You would have found me open!"
Well, give it up and call the day a blunder,
This last annoyance one more jagged rent
In the ill-fated fabric of the nervous afternoon.
Sighing again, I would have turned away,
When . . . wonder of wonders!
The impossible was happening,
The blank, unfriendly door was opening,
A store attendant asked me to come in!

There, in the bigness and hollowness
Of the almost empty room,
Peacefully having her shoes tried on,
Sat a belated customer . . . my aunt!
Calm as a June morning, and quite as cheerful,
As if indeed this were the sweet beginning,
Not the dread closing hour for overtired salesmen!
I looked with pity on her victim,
A white-haired man upon his knees before her,
Patient and unmurmuring, tying and untying,
Lacing and unlacing, striving with the utmost care
To please the fastidious feet.
So deeply occupied he was, he did not see me for a while.
And so I watched him, wondering . . .
For on his face was such a golden smile,
And in his manner such human kindness,
I could not help but question how,
At this the final tortured hour of day
Such blessèd things could be!

Even my aunt's sharp fussiness had vanished;
Even her crabbed ways had given place to peace.

And as we turned to breast the turmoil of the street once more,
I said in sheer amazement:
"That smile! . . . I can't explain it, somehow."
The street was dusty still, and full of trash and papers,
But — curiously — I did not see them now.
Did biting winds go flipping round me?
I did not seem to know.
Spring breezes and magnolia blooms
Went singing through my memory.
People were laughing as they hurried by.
How lovely were the electric lights,
The glow, the spur, the passion of the crowds,
How sweet, how sweet the knowledge of the people's nearness!

"I didn't know a smile could make the difference —
One genuine, happy human smile,
Welling up from the soul, irradiating the eyes. . . .
Why, he seemed almost to have a halo round him!"
And even my aunt, as she trotted along,
Was humming a sort of gay tune, softly, wistfully,
Under her breath.

SOON AFTER DARK

Soon after dark I feel my wings
Slow rising from the midst of things;
The weights that held me through the day
Slide off and seem to melt away.
I hear the summons, straight and far,
From one elusive emerald star —
They only hear it who can hark
Soon after dark.

Soon after dark I seem to find
Another self, a different mind.
The self that was drops softly down
Like fallen ashes o'er the town.
And lifted on the wind, I see
The mighty grief that shadowed me
Was but the blowing of a spark —
Soon after dark.

COURAGE FOR TO-DAY

Dawn

Who knows upon what stair
Of man's renunciation and despair,
Stands Beauty with her taper trembling white
To lead him into light?

Noon

Keep on, keep on
Till the dull task of dawn
Shall shine with noonday splendor!
You who may not surrender
The faith that is divine,
Keep on, keep on,
Till every task shall shine!

Evening Star

Have faith in the Hand that hung that lamp in the sky.
Have faith in the Power that brought you where you are.
No height that you have dreamed can soar too far,
No dream is higher than your goal is high.

YOUR BETTER SELF

There's another person in the room
Besides you!
There's a self that tries to make you strong and true . . .
And it doesn't matter what you used to do,
Your self is there,
Beside your chair,
Helping you!

There's another person in your soul
Besides you.
There's a comrade who will always help you through.
And it's just the moment when you're tired or blue
Your self is here,
Full of cheer,
Helping you!

There's another person in the dark
Besides you.
And he only asks to let him help you through!
When you're down and out, why, that's the very clue
That makes him cry,
"Here am I —
Helping you!"

SAY "I WILL"

(INSCRIBED TO DR. STEWART LEWIS)

Say "*I will!*"
Say it as oft as you can.
Say it till brain and being thrill
With joy and faith in man.
Say it till every vein and thew
Sings with the work it has to do;
Till flesh and bone and cartilage
Are free from sin and grief and age . . .
Say "*I will!*"

Say *"I can!"*
Say it as strong as you will.
Say it as if your spirit ran
Rejoicing up the stony hill;
Say it till all your sinews burn,
Your muscles tingle to return
And take the toil of every day
As lightly as a child at play . . .
Say *"I can!"*

Say *"I love!"*
Say it with all of your heart.
Nothing in earth or air above
So huge a wind may start.
Say it until your narrow frame
Forgets the mold in which it came;
The living blaze that is your soul
Leaps up and makes your being whole . . .
Say *"I love!"*

Say *"I live!"*
Say it and say it again.
Breathe it with every breath you give
In all your words with men.
Say it until your weary spine
Lifts with a strength that is divine;
Till heart and brain and lungs rejoice,
To hear once more the master's voice . . .
Say *"I live!"*

"NOT AFRAID" SONG

I'm not afraid to sing!
Whatever the hours may bring,
Whatever the wound, whatever the sting,
I shall only sing, I shall only sing.

I'm not afraid to pray.
I'm not afraid to say
That the forces of good are abroad to-day
And ill will be swept away.

I'm not afraid, I'm not afraid!
So good is the world, so warmly made;
So kind is the sun, so sweet the shade;
I'm not afraid, I'm not afraid.

I'm not afraid, I'm not afraid
With their talk of sin and their plaint of woe;
There's a something in me seems to know
It was never so, it was never so!

There's a something in me seems to swing
Like a lifted bell or a bird's bright wing;
For the soul is aloft, like a golden thing,
And a bird must sing, and a bird must sing!

JOY OF LIFE

Oh, I could gather you all in my arms and bless you!
Do you know what it is to have joy so intense
That it seems as if earth were a moment's suspense
Between now and hereafter?
As if Heaven at this instant were touching my eyes
And thrilling my fingers, and making me wise?
How shall I tell, so the thing I have felt will impress you
And hold you in awe as it holdeth my spirit this hour?
The bubbling of beauty like fountains afire in my spirit,
The surge in my being of tenderness, rapture and power?
How shall I speak it, so angels of light may caress you?
Oh, I could gather you all in my arms and bless you!

Section V



COUNTRY

FINDING PEACE

I have come away from the clamor,
I have come away from clamor and confusion,
I have parted with delusion.
I have left the horde of fevered ones who plan
New ways to torture man,
New ways to seek and find
What men call Truth.
Oh, I have come away to a still, sweet place
To walk again with youth.

The ardent ones with axes still to grind,
The hectic ones who labor in the city,
Oh, these shall have my pity,
But I have Truth to find!
And I have sought a still, secluded place
Where leaves may touch my face
And waters lap the shore with gentle sound.
Oh, I have found the true companionship
Of sweet-smelling ground.
Here may I rest all day
And watch the sky, and float upon its fleece;
At night, here may I find the Milky Way . . .
And Peace!

APRIL TREES

April trees upon the hill,
I can see your branches thrill
With the yearning that shall bring
Your lovely garment of the Spring.

April trees, I like you best
With the longing in your breast,
Knotty buds and stems astir
With kindled brown and lavender.

Have you heard the people talk
Of barren twig and barren stalk?
They have never looked to see
How fair a naked tree can be.

They have never seen the flush
Burning in the lilac bush
Long before the blossom stood
Smiling in her purple hood.

Wind nor rain could quench the spire
Quivering as candle fire
Long before the leaf awoke,
Long before the flower broke.

April trees, a cloudy blur
Waiting on the hills for her
Who shall make you live again,
You can laugh at simple men!

You whose slender branches beat
With the tidings of her feet;
You whose every twig and stem
Shall wear an emerald diadem!

I GOT A WHIFF OF SPRING

I got a whiff of Spring . . . yes, I did!
Though all the huddled trees were hard and bare;
Though earth was cold beneath her coverlid,
And snow was twinkling softly in the air. . . .
I heard a summons thin and wild and fleet,
And oh, the taste of something warm and sweet
Was left upon my lips to burn and thrill. . . .
A fairy wine that sings within me still!

I got a whiff of Spring . . . yes, I did!
I seemed to smell an orchard tree in flower;
Though all the trees with Winter ice were hid,
I got the freshness of an April shower;
A tang of knowledge, swift and warm and kind,
A door of beauty open to the mind,
An elfin voice that seemed to cry to me:
"The Spring is always here, could we but see!"

COMFORT IN THE SKY

I know not why it is that I
Should find such comfort in the sky.
The earth is such a friendly place,
And yet I lift a yearning face
To find the sky, when I am sad . . .
The sky alone can make me glad.

'Tis there my longing seems to find
A comprehension, deep and kind,
A roominess of white and blue,
Of darkness, when the day is through.
I somehow think I knew at birth
That skies were made before the earth.

Sweet is the earth, with all her sights,
Her liquid beauty of gold nights,
Her dappled hills of sun and cloud,
Her pleasures, calling me aloud. . . .
And yet, a-hungered for reply,
My soul swings up to find the sky.

The morning sky, superbly spread;
The noon, a banner above my head;
The twilight, dusted gray with mist,
The evening's walls of amethyst . . .
Something within, I know not why,
Seeks understanding in the sky!

QUESTIONS IN SPRING

Buds that push from the vine,
 Seeds that swell in the pod,
What can you tell of a Force divine,
 The Mystery we call God?

Grass that pierces the earth,
 Stems that gleam in the sun,
What do you know of life and birth
 In a garden just begun?

We from our Winter grief
 Reach to your beckoning,
You who would bring relief
 In colors and sounds of Spring —

What of the flame that burns
 Down in the dark and chill?
What of the skill that yearns
 To do the Creative Will?

How were your patterns wrought?
 How were your leaves designed?
How were your colors caught,
 With jewels intertwined?

You who have dwelt so near,
 Stirred by the Great Command,
What did your senses hear
 That mortals could understand?

Buds that push from the bough,
 Seeds that swell in the pod,
What can you tell us, here and now,
 Of the Mystery called God?

WELCOME TO SUMMER

Say good-bye to Spring for me!
Eager bud and anxious tree;
Pulsing ground and twigs on fire,
Pelting rains that never tire;
Frogs that thrill the marsh with glee —
Say good-bye to Spring for me.

Say good-bye. I need not care,
June has joys enough to spare.
Dear July has rosy feet,
Soon her path and mine shall meet.
We are lovers, she and I —
I must say to Spring, good-bye!

Say good-bye to Spring for me.
Summer spends so lavishly;
She has bought me with her gold —
Ne'er was slave so lightly sold,
Ne'er were fettered limbs so free —
Say good-bye to Spring for me!

ROSE GATHERING

The West has been rose gathering all day
In far-off golden gardens of the sky;
And now at last, having her drowsy way,
A wealth of Eden's blossoms in her arms,
She lounges on her purple couch, heaped high
With cloudy pillows, fashioned for her charms.
Her sun-illumined breast is opal fair,
Her form a fleece-enshrouded witchery;
She wears a star and crescent in her hair,
Her robe a shining marvel is to see —
For where the dusk makes dim its trailing hem
Glitters the spark of many a precious gem.

But lo, fair eyelids rest upon tired eyes,
Lax arms forget the burden they enfold;
She sinks in dreamful slumber, and behold . . .
A rain of crimson roses in the skies!

IF TREES COULD TALK

Voice of the Elm

Dear human children who desert my care,
Lost in the city's hot and frenzied way,
My joy is greater than the heart may bear,
When you return to me to rest and play.
When from the scorching roof, the pavement's glare,
You come at last to seek your holiday,
Oh, sweet to welcome you with branches fair,
Oh, sweet to comfort you and bid you stay!
While yet a long way off I see you homing —
My prodigals, so long have you been roaming —
And fling my welcome far as it may reach,
Yearning for human speech!

Voice of the Maples

In all the steeples of the trees
Bells are sounding to the sky,
Bells are pealing in the breeze
For the prodigals are nigh.
All the leaves will clap their hands,
Wayward ones returning home.
Bells are crying, "Come, oh, come!
You whose substance has been wasted,
Scattered in the foolish town,
Come where primal joys are tasted
And the lavish sky looks down.
Come and sleep beneath our shade —
Find the earth that God has made."

HONEYSUCKLE

My neighbor's honeysuckle vine
Has caused more saintly eyes to shine
And made more sinners pause to pray
Than any trump on Judgment Day.

SONG OF THE WHEAT

The wheat upon a hundred hills
 Made music like a lyre;
As when the House of Heaven fills
 With harps of singing fire.

Oh, many times the blowing wheat
 Had beckoned me to hear,
But never had such voices beat
 Like bells upon my ear.

A trillion tiny grains of gold
 Were chanting with their might;
I saw their gauzy wings unfold —
 It was a wondrous sight.

What said the shining grains of wheat
 As goldenly they cried?
"Come, learn of us and be complete;
 Be strong and satisfied!

"When God created sea and wind
 And starred the firmament,
He sent His substance to mankind
 With glorious intent.

"He hid within the humblest span
 His inmost, burning spark;
He sent His Life to nurture man —
 A seed within the dark.

"And grain on grain He multiplied,
For body, brain and soul,
That all His children be supplied,
The hungry be made whole.

"Each precious seed a word of light,
Each grain a tiny urn
Where God's desires are strong and bright
And fires immortal burn.

"And they who tear that message wide
And fling it to the sod,
All ignorantly cast aside
The sustenance of God."

As though a field of daffodils
Were suddenly in tune,
I heard the wheat upon the hills
Humming a song of June.

I saw from every gleaming hood
A fairy shape unfurled;
"Come! Take of us, for we are good —
Salvation for the world!"

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GOD THE ARTIST

God, when you thought of a pine tree,
How did you think of a star?
How did you dream of a damson west
Crossed by an inky bar?
How did you think of a dear brown pool
Where flocks of shadows are?

God, when you thought of a cobweb,
How did you think of dew?
How did you know a spider's house
Had spangles, bright and new?
How did you know we human folk
Would love them as we do?

God, when you patterned a bird song
Flung on a silver string,
How did you know the ecstasy
That crystal call would bring?
How did you think of a bubbling throat
And a darling speckled wing?

God, when you chiseled a raindrop,
How did you think of a stem
Bearing a lovely satin leaf
To hold the tiny gem?
How did you know a million drops
Would deck the morning's hem?

Why did you mate the moonlit night
With honeysuckle vines?
How did you know madeira bloom
Distilled ecstatic wines?
How did you weave the velvet dusk
Where tangled perfumes are?
God, when you thought of a pine tree,
How did you think of a star?

EEL FLIES

(SUGGESTED DURING THE EEL FLY SEASON ON THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER)

And Nature said, "My eels need feeding.
My eels are hungry and must have meat."
And over the water she started breeding,
Till clouds rose out of the noonday heat.
Yea, from nothing, like brown flame,
Swarms and swarms of eel flies came.

One long note of a violin,
Spread and spun in a web of glory,
Dizzying drifts of rapture thin
Round and round in a wordless story. . . .
Brief existence, moth-like, mad —
This was all the eel fly had.
This was all the eel fly knew,
Whirling on in moon or sun,
Till its little span was done.

All this madness for a meal
Flung upon the river's tide,
Just that Nature might provide
Lavish dinners for an eel!
All an eel would have to do,
Just to eat till he was through.

Once God looked about and said,
"Men need bread.
Yea, man's hunger must be fed. . . .
And the race I soon shall make
Of abundance must partake."
Out of chaos soon was forming
Essence for the body's warming;

Soon was shaping sturdy meat,
Soon was growing lovely wheat —
Fortressed by the jungle wide,
Where the savage beast should hide;
Fenced about with fear and fire,
God conditioned man's desire.

Then God spake from where He stood,
"Lo, my labor — it is good!"
Looked into the eyes of him
Who excelled the cherubim,
Saw the being He had made,
Rugged, happy, unafraid. . . .
"Go, dear offspring of my mind —
Bread awaits — *go forth and find!*"

VERMONT

Vermont, O Vermont, you have won me from the start;
You are tonic for the pulses,
You are healing for the heart.
There is comfort in your breezes,
There is ardor in your hills,
Where the music of the waterfall
A hymn of rapture spills.

Vermont, O Vermont, there is wealth within your soil;
There is glory for the many
Who have given you their toil;
For your lusty sons and daughters
Who were never known to shirk —
Oh, their slogan for eternity
Is work, work, work!

Vermont, O Vermont, there is health within your snows;
There is magic in your woodlands
Where the sturdy maple grows;
There is beauty in your marble,
There is syrup in your trees —
We shall swarm upon your sweetness
Like a host of human bees.

Vermont, O Vermont, you are vigor for the brain;
You are splendor for the spirit,
You are beauty after pain;
We shall sing you in the byways,
We shall sing you in the town,
We shall garland all our praises
For the queen's own crown!

HAYING TIME

When haying time
Is in its prime
And meadows all are mad with sweet,
Oh, who'd go down
To the tiresome town,
Oh, who'd go back to the city street?
O burning blue upon the hills,
O auburn ecstasy that thrills
The human pulse, the birdling's breast,
The chipping sparrow on her nest!

When haying time is in its prime,
My senses seem to rock and swing.
The very sky
Goes reeling by,
My heart's in love with everything!

O velvet shadows drifting slow
Where clouds like fairy barges go!
O hermit thrushes like a chime
Of hidden bells at haying time!

At haying time
It seems a crime
That helpless human souls should stay
In cities hot
Where breath is not,
And miss the smell of new-mown hay.
Oh, when shall every child of God
Have heritage of sun and sod?
Oh, when through every land and clime
Shall men be glad at haying time!

PAINTIN' BLINDS

(THE FARM HAND SPEAKS HIS MIND AS TO CITY BOARDERS)

Nobody minds
When you're paintin' blinds
And fixin' the house for the city folk
Who ain't got nothin' to do but smoke
And sit around an' drive their car —
I never see 'em walkin' far —
Nobody minds if they just "look in"
For a nod and a smile an' a bit of chin.
They seem to think it's a lot of fun
To watch me gettin' the paintin' done.
They look around the barn an' laugh;
They nudge and wink an' pass the gaff.
They stare at me — I see 'em look —
I read their minds like an open book.
They pity me for the joys I miss:
"Poor duffer — what a dog's life this!"
They pity me for paintin' blinds —
Nobody minds!

Then one o' the ladies, lookin' wise,
Sort o' lifts her head an' squints her eyes:
"How wonderful it all must be!
So full of *interest,*" says she.
And blinks at me a-paintin' blinds —
Nobody minds!
Nobody minds what people say
Who ain't got nothin' to do but play
And eat their meals an' dress an' talk
An' soil their shoes on the garden walk.
That high-heeled critter who tilts around
Like a hoppergrass just touchin' the ground,
Gettin' her breakfast at nine o'clock —
She'd ought to get up at the crow o' the cock
An' try the brook an' take a hike,
Brace up an' find what livin's like!
She'd ought to know what the morning's worth
An' see how the good God made this earth.
Who cares what she an' her kind say,
A-chaffin' me all times o' day:
"Well, Jim! You got the blinds most done?"
Gee whiz! They think it's heaps o' fun.
You bet they think their life is sweet —
The dear old *city* can't be beat.

They pity me, I pity them.
I wouldn't touch the city's hem.
I've got no use for the spangled gown
An' dusty rags o' the painted town.
I'd rather stay in the old woodshed
With friendly cobwebs over my head
And ramblers reachin' their hands at me,
An' a patch o' sky where I can see —
Lord! That bird's got a saucy throat!
Never did hear such a piercin' note. . . .
Well, here they come — that bunch o' folks
To spin their yarns an' tell their jokes.

Such loafin' sure I never seen —
But me an' the paint is pretty green.
Well, I've got plenty o' paint to spare —
I'll give her another coat for fair.
Let 'em pity me for paintin' blinds —
Nobody minds!

~ ~ ~

OGONTZ CAMP

(AFTER TAPS)

The stars seemed dropping down upon my bed,
So neighborly they hung above my head;
And fireflies, too, like spangles in the dark,
Sprinkled the air with spark on fairy spark.
A friendly tree stretched fragrant hands above me
As though my mother came and yearned to love me.
(To think a tree can come, like your own kin,
And call you " Dear " and gently tuck you in!)

Why, people seem to think that trees were made
For nothing much except to give us shade
Or yield us wood for tables, desks and chairs,
And houses, too, and practical affairs.
We seldom stop to think that trees may be
Alive and sensitive, like you and me;
I half believe they're *other folks* — don't you?
At camp, I somehow seem to *know* it's true.

I seem to know, deep down within my heart,
That woods and hills and streams are just a part
Of one great happy family; and oh,
If you'll just come to camp, you'll find it's so . . .
Yes, Ogontz Camp, not far from Sugar Hill,
Where everybody gets the biggest thrill;

Where life is keen, and sports are full of zest,
And dear Miss Sutherland is at her best!

Now just a postscript, whispered in your ear,
A final word for you alone to hear:
If you are very good and kind and sweet,
The camp will fling her treasures at your feet;
If you are wise, a bird may come and bless you;
If you are true, a blossom may caress you,
And in the night, with starlight overhead,
A mother tree will tuck you safe in bed!

THE CALL OF AUTUMN

Oh, the country, the country! 'Tis gorgeous in the Fall,
And back within the city I am hearing Autumn's call.
For the country is my kingdom and the country is my goal,
Though the city claims my presence, 'tis the country owns my soul.

Oh, the country, the country! I hear its golden horn;
It has lured me with its music since the day that I was born.
And when Autumn's conflagration spreads its glory through the trees,
The country, oh, the country, it calls me to my knees.

Oh, the city, the city! It sheds a mighty blaze,
But the magic of the country has its spell upon my days.
And I spurn the sweet seductions of the gay bejeweled town,
To behold how Mother Nature dons her rich October gown.

Oh, the country, the country, with sunset burning cold,
And in the east the lily moon who hides a heart of gold;
When thrusts of scarlet salvia afire upon the lawn
Are like the glowing hopes that I am sharing with the dawn.

Oh, the country, the country! My heart proclaims it best,
For only in the open may my turbulence find rest.
And only when I stand beneath the tall enduring sky
Do I claim the mighty Father, do I know that I am I!

THE MAN IN THE MOUNTAINS

"Yes, sir, I know what women's work is like.
There needn't anybody say a thing. . . . I *know*.
I've kept the house for nigh two years and more,
I've tended faithfully to every chore;
And folks that tell you women ain't got much to do—
Just send 'em here. I'll show 'em a thing or two!"

He stood within the cabin door, a patient man,
A soul whom fate had smitten with one stroke
On the bleak day his wife died and his heart broke.
"I've taken care of everything since then.
Oh, yes, I know! We always thought 'twas men
As had the heaviest, hardest work of all.
But let me tell you that from Spring till Fall
And Fall till Spring again, there ain't no man
Can carry all the work a woman can.

"Why, when a man is through, and smokes his pipe
Along of evening when he's had enough,
The woman's still a-doin' work that's rough,
Or washin' up the dishes, settin' bread,
Or something else before she goes to bed.

"Her work's a-goin' all the time, it seems —
A man has allus got a chance for dreams.
But women keep a-goin' till they die."
I saw the moisture gather in his eye
And sought to cheer him now as best I could.
"But you were good to her — so very good.
You mustn't grieve" . . . the same old useless word.
He murmured something that I scarcely heard,
Till afterward, it seemed that he would say:
"*No man is good whose wife must work that way!*"

THE FOREST FIRE

Flame is a yellow panther ready for his hour,
Flame is a panther primed for his hour of mating —
Look! In the woods his dearest one is waiting —
Flame is a panther ready to devour.

Flame is a panther crouched with amorous eyes,
Seeing athwart the dusk her form appearing,
Now in the timber low, and now uprearing. . . .
Twin of his sundered soul, to her he flies!

Twin of his destined wish, so long apart,
Spiral beauty ablaze to hear him calling,
Swift to his arms in ecstasy appalling,
Lo, she will dare the world to find his heart.

These, together, triumphant, clinging fast . . .
See how the moments multiply their wooing!
Tongue upon tongue of light their path pursuing,
Tree upon tree swept downward in the blast.

Flame is a yellow panther calling to his mate;
Flame is a panther. . . . Keep thou close behind him;
Capture and keep the twain apart, and bind him,
Lest, when he meet his own, it be too late!

HER OPERA COAT

Dame Nature is a fickle thing
And tires of what the Seasons bring.
She wearies of an emerald gown
And takes a fawn or velvet brown.
Her purple veils, her chiffons blue
No longer please as they used to do.

Then a spark leaps high in Nature's eyes:
"I'll buy me a pure white robe," she cries;
"And a white fur coat that will cover me
From head to toe . . . what a queen I'll be!
Then I'll seek me a beautiful spangled fan
To flaunt as only a woman can,
And frosty jewels to crown my hair —
(They shall call me the loveliest creature there.)
When I enter the room where the dancers are
The men shall murmur: 'The star . . . the star!'"
But oh, Dame Nature's a fickle thing,
She scouts so soon what the Seasons bring.
"What a deadly bore pure white can be!
I must carry a color soon," says she.

Then she summons her tailors, Sod and Sun,
And her milliner girls must run and run
To find the prettiest hats and ties
And things becoming to blue, blue eyes.

"The smartest thing I've encountered yet
Is a blush pink wreath and a green georgette.
Though fashion critics have said as well
There's a craze for gold. You can never tell!
There's a buttercup fad and forsythia, too . . .
I shall have them all — that's what I'll do!"

Oh, Nature loves what is gay and sweet —
She's a dainty thing, from curls to feet.
And I'm sure she's glad when she can wear
Frosty jewels in her hair,
And an opera coat of soft white fur . . .
Oh, ermine's the proper garb for her!

THE COLOR OF WINTER

Gray is the color of winter, you say?
Not if you'd seen what I saw to-day —
Snow that was shaded in many a hue,
Lemon, canary, and turkey-egg blue.

Yellow, where sunlight made sashes of gold,
Blue where a shadow lay soft as a fold;
Snow's just a spectrum, if only we knew —
Indigo, emerald, orange and blue.

Some think a shadow's the color of jet —
Shadows are dyed like a deep mignonette.
Often where bushes are thrusting their brown,
Red like a banner comes fluttering down.

Gray is the color of winter, you think?
But winter is violet, azure and pink.
Oh, winter is gay as my lady's new bonnet
With lilies and lilac and silver upon it.

Gray is the color of winter, you say?
Oh, could you see what I gathered to-day —
Trillions of rainbows, in one little span —
Know them and count them and claim, if you can!

Snow is a rainbow, and winter is made
Piling these rainbows in shade upon shade.
Autumn is lovely, and summer and spring —
But winter has colors that shimmer and sing.

WINTER SPORT

Brisk is the wind that sets my pace,
Sharp is the snow upon my face —
The cold and I shall run a race.

Too long, unfriendly and afraid,
The cold and I apart have stayed;
Now we shall romp as youth and maid.

Now shall the foolish tale be told
Of how a mortal hates the cold
And bargains for the firelight's gold.

Now shall the silly mood of woe
That held me but an hour ago
Be lost in flying wind and snow.

A stinging race shall now begin
Of Will against the stupid sin
Of soft indulgence . . . who shall win?

Brisk is the wind and keen the sky.
O trees and homes that flitter by,
You cannot stay me if you try!

Now shall I laugh, who once with pain
Would hide from icy wind and rain. . . .
My hearth shall beckon me in vain.

O hearth that made a slave of one
Who finds her life at last begun,
Your tyranny for me is done!

HOW RADIANT IS SNOW!

How radiant is snow!
Only the dwellers in the country know
How beautiful beyond degree
Snow can be.
From the first fall,
Drifting in feathery brightness over all,
To the last layer of enchantment spread
Where Winter's feet may tread,
Something of supernatural delight
Gleams in this lavish white. . . .
Yet nothing is more comforting and sweet
Than crunching snow like sugar 'neath the feet.

What lovely icing fit for fairy cake
Unsullied snow can make!
To-day the terraces that once were green
Are frosted thick, with traceries between
Where barren trees, in many a twisted line,
With sun for master, stamp their frail design. . . .
Some god, perhaps, would spell his name that way;
Who can say?

Snow in the sunset, crimson at its edge;
Snow like a friend that furs the sharpest ledge;
Snow in the dusk, with firelight on the wall —
Oh, this the most adorable of all!
Snow with the spangled background of the sky,
Snow when the swirling tempest heaps it high. . . .
Only the dwellers in the country know
How radiant is snow!

Section VI

DREAMS AND VISIONS

FIERY DREAMS

I cannot brook
The unillumined life and lonely look
By some called living.
I must have fiery dreams
And fiery ways to tell them.

Let me go apart
To my own pleasure, my own heart,
Rather than suit the time of leaden feet
And leaden longings.
Rather be wholly out of swing
With every ordered thing
If by such order life is robbed of flame,
Than meekly try a measure not my own.

Your measure, then, for you and mine for me.
And if we cannot join in one refrain,
Why, better so than everlasting pain
And friction such as never yet should be. . . .
I cannot brook
The unillumined round of a little day;
So, friend, farewell! I go another way.

~ ~ ~

LADY OF DREAMS

MARTHA BERRY

(WRITTEN AFTER A PILGRIMAGE TO THE BERRY SCHOOLS, MOUNT BERRY, GEORGIA)

If all the dreams of all the world
Should one day come to pass,
As hers who dreamed this Paradise
For mountain lad and lass;

If all the dreamers of the earth
Should make their longings true —
My neighbor's noble wish for me,
My happy wish for you;
The dream of love for all mankind,
Of wars forever stilled,
Of want and sorrow swept aside,
Utopia fulfilled —
No sweeter triumph could there be
Than hers who made this place
The very mirror of the Lord,
The rapture of His face.

Oh, never have I seen such beauty
Bursting from the soil,
Such splendor of activity,
Such miracle of toil,
Such yearning for enlightenment,
Such worship of the good
In holy hearts of mountain lads
Whose dreams she understood.
They build the roads,
They plant the trees,
They fashion houses meet
For any prince to occupy
On any noble street.
For here the humbler deeds of life
Are glorified, because
Perception sees their eloquence
And Knowledge spells their laws.

In wistful hearts of mountain maids
She found the Vision, too,
And nurtured it and brought to birth
As splendid mothers do.
Molder of future mothers,
Who weave and sew and spin,
And make the home a dwelling

Fit for queens to enter in.
Each lad a living torch of light,
Each girl a golden star,
You'd never find their like again,
Though you should travel far.

Oh, never have I heard such tales
Of want and sacrifice,
Nor have I seen such godliness
Ablaze in human eyes.
And always shall I bear with me
Along the enchanted years
The songs they sang to us who listened
Unashamed of tears.

If all the dreamers of the earth
Should make their longings true —
My neighbor's golden wish for me,
My royal wish for you;
If suddenly like fairy cities
Breathed upon the glass,
Our dearest hope for humankind
Should one day come to pass —
As lovely as a harvest field
Or brave as goldenrod —
What triumph for humanity,
What ecstasy for God!

And yet if hers have fruited thus
Like grapes upon the vine,
Like apples out of Paradise —
Then why not yours and mine?

O God, bequeath to all of us
The mighty strength to make
Our highest dream, reality —
We ask it for Love's sake!

AMBITION OF THE STONES

The First Stone

Some day shall I mount and see
Domes and turrets talk to me.
Neighbored by some stately spire,
Capped with clouds and ringed with fire,
Shaken by the organ's tone,
I shall rise to claim my own!
Come, O builder, who shall take
All there is of me to make
Some immense cathedral where
Pinnacled in azure air
I shall rear the hopes of men,
Help them find their God again!

The Second Stone

Give to me the splendid speech
Of buildings soaring out of reach,
Founded in the city's mart,
Pulsing with the people's heart.
Let me house the swarms that nest
As birds within a mountain crest.
Tall and lovely, strong and sure,
Steeled to conquer and endure,
Soaring safe above the street,
Find my destiny complete. . . .
Cloud and star and sea and earth
And people to proclaim my worth!

The Third Stone

Oh, I would build nor spire nor dome,
But help to rear some little home,
Some human habitation sweet
Where rings the chime of children's feet.

Hearth or wall or chimney place,
I would fill whatever space
He, the Maker, should design —
Proud to call His pattern, mine.
Take whatever thrones you please,
I will never choose but these:
Love and babies in the nest —
You may have and keep the rest!

SEA GULLS AND FERRY BOATS

I am glad for sea gulls,
Dipping over the water in mist or sun —
I am glad for sea gulls.
Out where the busy tugs and steamers run
I love to see the flashing of their wings
That soar like dreams above these concrete things. . . .

Yet tugs and steamers, too, were Dreams that ran
Once on a time within the mind of man.
And why should I rejoice in birds alone?
Are steel and wire and copper, wood and stone
Less comely than the visions they enshrine?
I am glad for sea gulls,
But ferry boats and bridges, too, are mine!

I am glad for sea gulls,
Shining above the water or the shore,
I love to watch their wings.
But oh, my heart rejoices more and more
In homely, practical things.
In ships and wharves and ferry boats and funnels;
In waterways and roads and dykes and tunnels;
In rails and pipes and reservoirs and tanks. . . .
For all these common things my heart gives thanks.

Oh, once was every useful thing as fair
As sea gulls gleaming in the salt blue air;
And ferry boats must ever seem to me
Lovely as any vision that I see!

AFTERNOON NAP

I have had a beautiful plush nap,
Embroidered with oblivion
And lined with the dearest dream
About God.

The day had been fretful, crowded, febrile;
People raved and struggled around me,
Crying for achievement, power.
Men fought one another, women goaded men,
Youths and maidens, too, were fiercely clamoring,
One word upon all lips alike.
Nowhere in all the world was anything
But one continual struggle for *success*.

The noise of that crying deafened me,
Weighted me with a great weariness,
Jangled my nerves and tore my fibres,
Till I doubted if I could live.
Then I sank into a depth like velvet,
Thickly padded and sumptuous with sleep.
And no one spoke to me, and nothing did I see;
No Voice, no Vision, no Revelation
Such as the saints may tell. . . .
But when I wakened like a newborn infant
Nestled within the bosom of its mother,
Blinking in rapture at the jewels on her bodice,
I knew as if the Book itself had told me
Of a white Breast immortal,
From which the soul drinks nourishment.

No sounds could say it as the Silence said it:
"O children, O my children!
Such vehemence, such anxiety,
When just above you is the Secret,
Waiting in the quiet till you shall come."

Yes, friend, I will join you in your journeys;
I will work with you or play with you
Or help you solve the problems of the world. . . .
For I have had a beautiful plush nap,
Embroidered with oblivion
And lined with the dearest dream
About God!

ALONE WITH THE STARS

Have you ever awakened softly,
In the hush of a slumbering night,
When naught but the winds made murmur,
And naught but the stars gave light,
And thought how deep was the stillness,
And felt how vast was the space,
While you wondered in awe at the power
That was holding the worlds in place?

It was thus that I suddenly wakened,
When all was so hushed, so still
That the deepness and vastness of silence
All my being seemed to fill.
And the winds held their breath in wonder,
While the stars with reverent eyes
Looked down in glimmering radiance,
From out of the waiting skies.

And I, too, was waiting, breathless,
For something, I could not tell,
Alone with the stars and stillness,
Entranced by this wondrous spell;
When a swift, sudden rushing of rapture
Sweeping over my being came,
Like the glow of a jasper fire,
Like the warmth of a soft white flame.

And then, oh, I felt a sweet nearness,
Even so that I hid my face,
And an infinite tenderness round me,
Wrapt me, held me in close embrace.
What was it quick throbbing within me?
Oh, ecstasy divine,
My God, 'twas Thy great heart pulsing
In unison with mine!

MAY-TIME VISION

Oh, how good the world is
With everything that's fair!
I cannot see why human life
Should be so black with care.
Oh, how sweet the earth is
With roses and with rain —
And why should mortal living be
So desperate with pain?

I cannot see why men should sin
And suffer as they do.
I cannot see why death should come
When only Life is true.

I cannot see why any folk
Should lack for love and food,
When all the universe is rich
With everything that's good.
Oh, how pure the earth is
If we could only see!
It is not true that hate and wrath
And battlefields should be.
How can it be that men go forth
To butcher and to slay?
O God, pour through their hearts but once
The ecstasy of May!

SANCTUARY

(INSCRIBED TO TRINITY CHAPEL, TRINITY METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SPRINGFIELD, MASS.)

Only a step from the road,
A league from the toilsome town —
But oh, what hands to lift your load,
What splendor streaming down!
What eloquence of architecture
Pure as forest shade,
The ancient hush of Eden
Lightly on your spirit laid.
The remedy of wings for woe,
Of triumph for despair,
Eternities that breathe and glow
Within the quiet air.

As though the very heart of God
Had flowered in this place,
Through windows rich as goldenrod
And carvings fine as lace,

His majesty had spoken
In the beauty of an aisle,
And altars were a token
He had prayed with us awhile.

Only a step from the street,
And the troubled ways of men;
Yet here may God with mortals meet,
And Christ be born again.

THE VISION PERFECT

When life is new, the journey just begun,
'Tis love that we would claim,
Or honor, wealth and fame.
Life lures us with these baubles, one by one,
Even as we, with promise of red toys,
Tempt toddling girls and boys.
So beckons Life along the irksome way
Toward the revealing day.

Oh, Life is very wise!
Softly, sometimes, though other times with pain
She draws from us the trifles we would gain;
Gathers her trinkets from our gloating eyes.
Then, on a hilltop . . . "See!
Lo, the Perfected Plan I had for thee.
Ever I kept it hidden till thy sight
Was strong to bear the light."

And we who dreamed of honor, fame and gold,
Seeing how vast the pattern is, and strange,
Spreading in splendid cycles, range on range,
Until the very heart of God is told,
Answer the angel calling us by name,

Asking: "What blessing now, O child of earth?
What shall the guerdon be, of greatest worth?"
"O Life, this, and this only, do I ask:
That I be strong and equal to the task!"

SLEEP, THE RESTORER

Softly I lay my body down,
Smooth and straight as a velvet gown.
Gently I put the flesh aside,
For on to Dreamland I must ride.
I, who have used this delicate frame
Shall seek the country whence I came —
The far, sweet country of the soul
Where earth-tired people are made whole.
So shall I bask for one whole night
In health and love and peace and light,
Till morning stars shall call their daughter,
Then once more the cold blue water,
Once again the thrilling morn —
"Be glad, be glad you're born!"

THE PROPHET

"Give me," the prophet cried, "O God, Thy highest thought for man!
Breathe through my mind the secret of Thy mighty, kindled plan.
Let me a channel be through which Thy splendid thought shall pour,
That future centuries of men shall worship and adore."

And while he waited, half afraid, down from the heights there came
Torrents of overwhelming light, the miracle of flame.
Standing with fires of amethyst ablaze upon his brow,
"God, Thou hast spoken. I will speak. Hear my eternal vow!"

He penned it, precious word for word, in tracery of fire,
And doubted not the world would heed the might of God's desire.
But men who read the message turned aside with scornful mien.
"It is not real," they said; "such dream as this no man has seen."

Then sadly went the prophet back, mocked, cheated and denied;
Folded away the lightning word God's tongue to him had cried.
Starving and pinched and cold he went, while like a far refrain
The murmur of divinity made music through his pain.

And now he wrote the wrongs his body felt, his eyes beheld,
And all the world proclaimed him great, bestowed the fame withheld.
But some day, some day, grown at last to reach the heights of flame,
Humanity, afire with God, that message shall acclaim.

For when God speaks, the thunder of His word shall last alway —
Beyond the cycles of mankind, beyond the Judgment Day.
And as the prophet saw the word, all men shall see it, too,
Aglow with the celestial light, confessing "It is true!"

Section VII

"*EATS*"

THE BAKERY

Savory, delicious, hot and golden brown,
The fragrance of the bakery is wafted over town.
Round loaves and square loaves, gleaming butter-bright,
Tempting in the daytime, wonderful at night.
Loaves of braided eloquence, not to be resisted,
Every sort of pastry thing beautifully twisted;
Hot buns, rye buns, cross buns and gay,
Sugar cakes and jelly tarts for people who can pay.

Doughnuts in the window and cookies 'neath the glass;
Cinnamon and allspice to lure you as you pass.
Dreary is the night wind — what do people care?
Citron and vanilla leave a perfume in the air!
Citron and vanilla and a smell like russet brown,
When the fragrance of the bakery is wafted over town.

Beautiful, ambrosial, in the dead of night,
Often it would waken me, tease me with delight —
Exquisite aroma through the city spread,
Warm and keen and ravishing — the smell of baking bread.
How I wish the famished ones all might come and feast —
All the sad and sunken faced children of the East,
Swollen with starvation — oh, could they but share
When the fragrance of the bakery is golden in the air!

Oh, could I but summon them from hunger-stricken lands,
Oh, could I but thrust this bread in famine-shriveled hands!
Hot buns, rye buns, rich buns and gay,
Juicy pies and jelly tarts for people who can pay.
Piercing is the night wind, *and all of us must care*
When the fragrance of the bakery is hot upon the air!

PEACHES

I saw peaches in the market to-day,
Dimpled and seductive, painted by the sun;
Something rather acid I had been about to say
Vanished from my memory before I had begun.
Peaches have an eloquence of a subtle kind,
Peaches have a language entrancing to the mind.

I saw peaches in the market place,
Downy as a bird's breast, wonderful to hold;
Rosy as the flush upon a maiden's face,
Tanned beneath its beauty to a mellow gold.
Peaches have an utterance, just as if they said:
"Mighty is the Mystery turning us to red!"

I saw peaches, and I gladly bought;
Carried them in quantities, grateful as could be;
Stored them with the treasures of my deepest thought,
Took away the secret of their joy with me.
Always they've been telling me, like an open book,
"Something most Mysterious has given us our look!"

Peaches have an utterance more eloquent than food,
Peaches have a meaning more enticing than we think;
Looking on their loveliness seems to do me good,
Color has an ecstasy the soul may drink;
I'm a better person for seeing peaches there—
Purified, exalted, as if I'd said a prayer.

When I look at peaches, saffron with the sun,
All my joyous purposes flutter back to me;
I recall the good things I have ever done,
Focused by the mellowness my eyes can see.
Peaches have a look most melodiously sweet,
Peaches have a use for us, other than to eat.

I saw peaches in the market to-day —
Crimson, seductive, luscious to the eye.
All my secret grudges vanished quite away. . . .
I nodded to my enemy as she passed by.
Nodded to my enemy — think I'll go and call!
Peaches seem to tell me she isn't one at all!

"DINNER IS SERVED"

(INSCRIBED TO ETHEL)

Ethel put before me
Oysters icy cool,
Celery like stalks of lilies
In a fairy pool;
Brought me soup supremely hot
And rich with seasoned charm,
Peas and fresh asparagus
New taken from the farm.

Oh, the capon Ethel cooked
As only Ethel can!
It would cure the tantrums
Of the wildest man,
It would make melodious
The pain of family strife;
Who partakes of Ethel's cooking
Finds an altered life.

Then a golden shortcake,
Browned crisply — just enough —
With berries red, and over that
A whirl of creamy fluff.
Here's to Ethel's artistry!
I care not what they claim
Who cry that genius should be called
By any other name.

All honor to the skill of her
Who makes her task so fine
That other arts must bend to see
Her gift, too, as divine!

TOAST

Among the things that please me most —
My Muse would nimbly mention toast.
For breakfast or for simple tea
There's nothing gets so close to me
As dainty squares of toasted bread
With golden butter neatly spread —
Yes, Mary! Bring another plate;
I'm sorry I should be so late.

I know no other common food
That seems so sumptuously good;
No viands on the kitchen range
Can boast so fairylike a change.
It's just as if a wand should bring
Its magic to a common thing —
It's just as if a spark should make
A sunbeam of a snowy flake,
An amber luxury of what
Our memory had else forgot.

Our social usage cannot boast
A kinder thing than tea and toast.
("Now, Mrs. Jones, I'm sure you'll take
Another cup for friendship's sake!
More lemon? No? More sugar then?
One lump or two — just tell me when") . . .
There's nothing like a cup of tea
To foster hospitality.
And yet without its comrade, toast,
What pleasure comes to friend or host?

Some morning when the wind is chill,
The heavy moments fraught with ill;
When naught that you may do or say
Brings mirth or magic to the day;
When homely bread no taste invites,
Just draw the shades and switch the lights
And see what golden toast will do
To bring your sunshine back to you!

Among the things that please me most —
My Muse would nimbly mention toast!

POTATOES

Mother likes potatoes delicately mashed,
Daddy likes potatoes well done and hashed,
Brother takes potatoes any nice way —
Never does refuse them at any time o' day.
But I like potatoes baked in the skin,
Mealy and inviting when you put the butter in.

Funny how potatoes sort o' come in right,
Whether they're for breakfast or a mid-day bite;
Whether they're for company who "just dropped in,"
Or just a little supper with your kith and kin.
Saratoga chips and potatoes Julienne —
(More in the kitchen — pass your plates again!)

Seems so kind of comforting and cosy-like to fix,
When you know the clever ways, all the little tricks —
Salting them and shredding them and watching till they're done,
Crisp and brown and savory, every single one. . . .
But of all the luscious and attractive things to eat,
Give me baked potatoes and I'll not ask meat!

Poets sing of dandelions, meadow grass and weeds,
Authors write profoundly of our ordinary needs,
But "common white potatoes" seem unworthy of a song,
Though no one deigns to tell me just exactly what is wrong.
God has made the meadows and the grasses and the dew —
Don't you think perhaps He made potatoes, too?

AT ANY COST!

"You *must* keep down at any cost!"
"My dear, a dozen pounds I've lost.
I fear should I lose any more
My strength and health would suffer sore."
"What matter?" Fashion has her say,
"The flattened form has come to stay.
Reduce, reduce! Cut down your diet.
Hard? I know. Brace up and try it.
Visit not your neighbor's table,
Cultivate the vegetable.
Walk and run and exercise. . . .
Cut yourself to half your size!

"Never mind your hollow feeling,
Pangs of hunger on you stealing;
Use your will and do without!
Better starve than be so stout."
Thus saith Fashion's stern decree
Tyrannizing you and me.
Pleads a flushed and healthy dame:
"Fashion's edict is a shame!
I can well remember when
Buxom maids appealed to men." . . .

"Well, my dear, you've got to do it.
Might as well go blithely to it.
Make your figure thinner yet —
Cheery days of old forget."

"But I've lost a dozen pounds!
Feels far flatter than it sounds.
If I shrivel smaller still
Gone will be life's olden thrill.
Dwindled to a broomstick span
Frail shall woman seem to man.
Earth will lose its glow for me —
Nothing human shall I be.
Just a frame on which to drape
Fringe and fabric. Just a shape
Minus joy and minus good,
Effigy of womanhood!" . . .
Fashion smiles. "What matter, pray?
Flattened forms have come to stay!"

Section VIII

GIRLS

GIRLS

Pretty, twinkling girls,
Blowing along Fifth Avenue,
I like you. I am cheered by you.
Of you I heartily approve.
You are like sudden flowers in a dark canyon —
Starring the gloom with color and delight.
Each delicate face on a fragile stem,
Framed for bewitchment and surprise.
A little breeze sets all your leaves fluttering;
A radiance flashes out of you;
Each slender step is like a sunbeam,
Shining because it must.
Man made the canyon, but God made flowers.
What is the Power that makes you as you are —
Bright-blowing, beautiful girls?

Glittering, gorgeous girls,
Dancing along Broadway,
What is the urge that makes you as you are —
Brilliant, challenging, restless, feverish,
Every glance a thrust of fate,
Every pulse a cry for Fame and Power and Splendor?
You are insatiable flame, you are burning winds
Blowing across the town.
No quiet homes or steady, grinding toil for you.
Only the calcium; only the gaping throng; the sting and
fury of ambition;
The flare of vanity; the cataract of applause.
Life is not life without this rage for Power,
Yet some day, gorgeous girls, some far-off day,
You'll yearn to be . . . just girls.
Oh, you will pray for a cool and quiet garden
Where you can be simple and serene!

Daring, courageous maidens,
Trudging along Sixth Avenue,
Little workers from big families,

Toilers brave in the boisterous, uncaring town —
Out of the crowded and smothered conditions of home,
How have you come?
Tell me the secret, dear little girl with the buckle, the wing and the rose —
Cramming your hat box under the bed at night;
Washing and pressing and sewing when others are sleeping;
Folding away your ribbons and girdles and ties —
Sweet Cinderella, guarding your glittering shoes —
Tell me the How of your huge, incredible joy!
I have seen ladies with myriad maids in attendance,
I have seen ladies burdened with Time and Gold,
Never so glad as you!

Oh, the gladness of you, girls!
The leaping, singing hope of you.
Your joy is like a gushing stream of light,
Pouring upon me as I pass you in the street.
All the tightened corners of my heart blow open
Like buds in the streaming sun.
I will bathe in that sunshine.
I will saturate my soul in your abounding loveliness.
I will be strong in your strength overflowing.
For you are strong, as men are strong.
You, with the delicate shoulders,
Bearing the burdens of father and mother —
You are a cure for grudges and grouches and fearings;
You are a tonic; you are a medicine;
I will let your healing inundate my heart.

O lovely, lovely girls,
Blowing along the town,
You are like sudden roses
Mid hurrying weeds.
I will sing of you, I will sing a song just for you —
Wonderful, wonderful girls!

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The long dining room is shuttered against the brassy
tattoo of the sun;
Its smooth white tables are oases in the parched and
swollen daytime;
Its screen doors, newly painted,
Speak denial to the bees and June bugs and whimpering
mosquitos.
Its cool curtains and decorous china offer contentment,
And guests are glad of crisply moving waitresses
Aproned in immaculate white.
Over in the bay window, the debutante from New York,
flanked by her family,
Glances humanly about the room, struck by odd "types"
in this temporary hostelry.

Her mother, openly aloof, frowns a rebuke, unseen.
Two pairs of eyes meet across the dim length of the dining
room.
A glad scarlet streams into the girl's already sun-burned
cheeks.
"Don't you remember, mother? We met him at the art
exhibit."
"My memory fails me. So should yours. He is a nobody.
One of the impossibles!"
"But, mother!"
"That is enough! You are not to remember him. I am
your mother. You understand."
A breath of ice tempers the fierce glow of the simmering
noon.
The crispness of the dining room turns limp, though not
with heat.
Sparks that leaped from eye to eye drop like black ashes
into the meaningless hour.
A vast wave of negation washes over that scene,
Wiping its golden characters from the sand forever.

Yonder at a corner table, surreptitiously powdering her face,
Blushes the village beauty, smitten with awe and envy.
Her sister from the Town, aping the country, disdains powder, preferring an "honest tan."
Behold the country lassie, aping the city, plastering her face with concealing cornstarch!
How wonderful to live as *she* lives. . . .
She, with the retinue of maids and servants;
The country house and the town house; the yacht; the many automobiles. . . .
What vague sophistication in her hat; the lines of her skirt; the pose of her head. . . .
Oh, to be born like that! Oh, to be free! Free from the sordidness of country living. . . .

Now *she* is rising from table. Now they are all going. . . .
How glorious to be whizzed away in a splendid touring car. . . .
Off toward the sunset and the unnamable glamour!
How dreadful to go back to her little cottage
Next door to the post office and general grocery!
How ghastly to live on, day after day, her only diversion
Watching the country laborers and their families
Purchasing soda and ice cream cones at the corner drug store.
The boredom of it! The misery of it! Oh, to be free!

The girl in the touring car had tears on her eyelashes.
The burning scarlet had come back to her cheeks.
"Mother, you treat me like a baby instead of a woman!
Even my thoughts are padlocked. . . .
My every glance is guarded,
And jailers watch my faintest smile.
Look at that little village girl . . . worshiped by the village boys,
Free as a bird, to make what friends she will.
What do I care for riches? I want to be free!"

Why *shouldn't* I wear smart stockings?
Why *shouldn't* my hat be gay?
Behold how the gorgeous poppy bed
Beckons across the way;
Behold how the blue delphinium
Bows to the red oak tree,
How the daisy nods to the clover
And the rambler tempts the bee!

Why *shouldn't* I like Sweet William
And all his brothers too,
And wear for them the flappiest things. . . .
What other kind would do?
Why, no one dares to criticize
Nor gossip says a thing
When down the wind those flappers come—
Young Summer and young Spring.

Oh, Spring's the gayest flapper yet!
I'll bet she bobs her hair,
Wears powder on her saucy cheek—
Yet no one seems to care.
And no one tries to queer the game
When Summer brings her lure.
The poets call her beautiful,
The pulpits call her pure.

Well, all I ask is justice
And I put the question pat:
Why *shouldn't* I sport the swaggerest suit
And don the spiffiest hat?
Why *shouldn't* I wear gay hosiery
When Nature wears them too?
A fig for the rage of critical age—
To my own self I'll be true!

RINGING TRUE

If she doesn't ring sweet,
I care not how many the charms you repeat,
How witty, how clever, how fond and all that —
Her face like a rose 'neath its beautiful hat —
Though she smile as she gathers my arm in her own,
There's a something that tells me — her glance or her tone,
Or maybe a feeling I can't quite explain —
That our friendship is vain.

If she doesn't ring true,
I care not how sparkling the virtues in view. . . .
No matter how lovely the deeds you may boast,
Though her laughter be quick and her answers a host,
There's a warning, an inward and subtle command,
Though friendly and swift is her touch on my hand,
And I wonder: "How much does she care — through and through —
When she doesn't ring true?"

If she doesn't ring clear,
I care not how comely and nice she appear —
You may carol her praises as oft as you please. . . .
I judge her pretenses by symbols like these:
A coin on the marble, a bird in the sun;
Sweet water that over brown pebbles doth run;
The gladness of children — ah, this is my clue —
Their laughter rings true!

BE THYSELF

(FOR THE SENIOR CLASS OF THE OGONTZ SCHOOL, 1928)

Girls are gardens about to bloom —
Give them room!
Girls are dreams about to dare
The test of earth and sun and air —

Give them ground and roots and care.
Girls — oh, girls are everything
Blithe and lovely in the Spring;
And apple orchards white with May
Are girls on graduation day.

The world is such a solemn place,
How good it is that girls should grace
Our ancient deserts of despair
With glory such as gardens wear.
I think we need to know their worth;
That when a girl child comes to birth
The gods are striving to reclaim
For earth the old primeval flame,
Striving our dark to put to flight
By Love's commanding word of "Light!"
The miracle of leaf and stem,
Of colors like a burning gem,
Are not so wonderful to see
As that incarnate mystery
Which lives in girlhood, and sustains
The future race within her veins.

If I could cry a word to shake
The heart eternally awake,
That word would be, without mistake,
"Be thou the creature that thou art!"
Look deep into thy mind and heart;
Discover that supreme design,
The pattern so superbly thine,
Embroidered by the Eternal Hand.
Obey the Infinite Command!
Become the thing the Creator meant
When on thy being He was bent.

Whatever thou wert born to be —
Lily or rose or lilac tree —
Be that one thing courageously.

Let none disturb thee or dissuade;
For some great purpose wast thou made.
Be thou the thing the gods intend,
And all the world shall prove thy friend!

THE VIEWPOINT

(TWO MEN DISCUSS PRETTY GIRLS)

"How good it is to look on joyous things —
On pretty girls, preening their happy wings!"
Thus spoke the first, who had an artist's eye,
Watching the gay procession flitting by.
"Yes," he continued, "pretty girls are everywhere.
They look like tropic creatures mid the glare
Of modern cities, where they seem to swarm
Like birds with plumage delicate and warm,
With dainty color and seductive throat,
Each with a separate charm, a different note.
'Tis quite bewildering, indeed, to find
So many types in the Creative Mind.
I am amazed by them, as by the bloom
Of myriad flowers when there seems no room
For any further patterns to appear,
Even the frailest shining sharp and clear.
Oh, beauty is a wondrous thing!" he said.
I almost looked to see him bare his head,
As one who saw a sunrise and was glad
Because of some new vision that he had.

Another man who watched with glances keen
The bright procession with its dart and sheen
Of silken hose and Cinderella shoes,
As if no single item he would lose,
Passed a thick hand across his flabby cheek,
And though I could not hear, I saw him speak,

Leering, to the companion at his side. . . .
I closer came, to hear what he replied:
"Yes, pretty girls are cheap," I heard him say,
Throwing his finished cigarette away,
And with the gesture showing what girls meant
To men on pleasure bent.
"Sure! Pretty girls are plenty — take your pick!"
I felt my spirit falter and grow sick,
But smiled again, remembering that other word —
And now it seemed a blessing that I heard.
That one who almost seemed to bare his head —
"Oh, beauty is a wondrous thing!" he said.

RAINBOW GIRLHOOD

Mother, if you could see the stuff of which I'm made,
You'd see a shining rainbow, hue for hue,
My heart the crimson and my mind the blue,
My dreams the counterpart of every shade
That lifts an arch of triumph for the sun.
And yet my wishes all, seem every one
So glaring and so bold, the elders say . . .
I wonder, have they never felt that way?

I am a rainbow! I am not a cloud,
Nor creamy dusk, nor overwhelming noon;
I am not pale nor placid like the moon —
I am the glowing voice of color, crying loud.
So, when you bid me wear a somber tone
Or modify my ways as others do,
You make me, mother, not myself — but you;
You clothe me with a shadow not my own!

O elders all, who stupidly deplore
The glamours of the young that seem but vain,
Summon your God that He may send His rain
And drench your souls with gladness as of yore.

Summon your God, and passionately pray
For sudden light with swift returning youth
That you may stand beneath the arch of Truth
Spanning with virgin loveliness the sky,
Able to answer to the joyous cry:
"Oh, I must live as Life has fashioned me!
Look! I am a rainbow. Let me be!"

BASQUES AND BONNETS

The good old days when girls wore basques and bonnets —
How fair they were, how good, our fathers tell.
Devotion then was single, undisputed,
For men loved women well.
Divorce was then a horror seldom mentioned —
A lifted brow was signal for retreat —
And he was banished who, though well intentioned,
Should broach a topic quite so indiscreet!

The good old days when girls wore basques and bonnets —
How loyal were their lovers, we are told.
The freedom of our modern education —
How strange to them, how bold!
Eugenics! Why, their mothers would have fainted
If daughters then such wisdom had imbibed.
The modern flapper, bobbed and curled and painted
Would seem a horror not to be described.

The good old days when girls wore basques and bonnets,
I somehow yearn to have them back again.
I cannot think that love has gone forever,
Because our maids are equals with our men.
For why should freedom take a toll so heavy,
And why should knowledge look at love askance?
O progress, what a cruel tax you levy,
Who take from us our greatest gift — romance!

WHY GOD MADE GIRLS

(INSCRIBED TO MY GIRLS AT OGONTZ SCHOOL)

When God made girls,
I think the world was growing rather dim
Because so little laughter came to Him.
For none had heard of laughter on the earth,
Where lonely Adam had no heart for mirth.

And yet, God's works were fresh as fairyland;
The woods were sweet and joyous from His hand.
His wind-swept grasses, eager and athrill,
Like sudden fire were running up a hill.
A swarm of butterflies went gleaming by,
And orchards blushed beneath the ardent sky.
Oh, everywhere were ecstasies and wings,
Yet something wanting in the scheme of things. . . .
Then dawned the vision, delicately white
As birches dancing in the summer light.

When God made girls,
He thought of irises beside a brook;
He thought of hilltops with their morning look;
He brooded long above a lily pond
Till brier roses beckoned from beyond —
Then ox-eyed Susans showed Him where to go
To find His flower whiter than the snow.

"O shining grass, O buds, O morning pearls;
O birches white and slenderer than girls;
O daisies, buttercups and lilting things;
O darting creatures poised on satin wings —
With such as you my kingdom shall not fail,
For beauty is divine and must prevail!"

God smiled, and all His artistry unfurled;
"Come, lovely girls, and glorify the world!"

Section IX

HOME

THE HOUSEWIFE'S HYMN

O God, I thank Thee!
With every glowing part of me,
From the whole heart of me,
I thank Thee, God!

How shall I say it? What the words to tell
The warm, sweet glory and the bosom swell?
Forgive the language of my simple tongue;
I cannot say what wiser ones have sung.
Listen, and I will tell it, God, in my own way;
For I must speak it on this wonder day.

Somehow, Father — be it not shame to me! —
'Tis in such humble ways I compass Thee.
I seem to see Thee in the simplest things:
Foamy water that bubbles and sings,
Bursting in rainbows over the washtub's rim;
The clean, sweet clothes filling my basket to the brim —
How white they flutter at the wind's brisk will
That whips them whiter still!
And when, over the ironing-board billowing clover-sweet,
They smooth to satin beneath the friendly heat,
I feel such thrill of happiness. . . . Forgive me, Lord,
If praise like mine should not accord!

God, I am one who cannot understand
The fearful works of Thy mysterious hand,
The great immensity that swings above;
The thing I understand is human love.
Yea, human love and human things: the touch
Of well-worn objects that I love so much —
Cushion and chair, dishes and pan and broom,
The comradeship of a familiar room;
My plants there in the window, and the glow
Of shining tin things hanging in a row.
Scorn, if Thou wilt, my common human way —
I must speak truth and only truth this day.

O God, I seem to find Thee everywhere!
The steam that rises from the kettle there
Seems more a miracle, somehow, to me
Than all the heavenly marvels that I see.
The hum of homey things upon the range
Fills me with rapture; Father, is it strange,
Since these Thy products are of grain and food
And Thou Thyself hast called them very good?

And is it wrong, O God — my surging pride
When the rejoicing oven door swings wide
On russet bakings I have made to feed
My hungry brood? Thou knowest, Lord, their need.
Thou knowest how they lean to me for life;
Even the strong, brave man who calls me wife —
The father of my flock — must look to me
For blood and sinew and the strength to be.
This, then, the greatest, dearest thing of all —
To know that I may answer to their call;
That Thou hast made me mother, friend and mate,
Keeper of life and molder of their fate.
By this I know the universe as Thine —
That hearts and homes and people are divine!
Is there a greater gift in all Thy store?
My woman's heart is full — I ask no more.

O God, I thank Thee!
With every glowing part of me,
From the whole heart of me,
I thank Thee, God!

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THE HEART'S CORNER

A shaded candle set in a square of books,
A bowl of roses — joy enough for one —
A task completed and a task begun —
That's how my corner looks.

A mound of cushions heaped against the wall,
A blowing curtain white and thin and sweet —
My film of magic drawn against the street —
A chair, a desk or table — that is all.

Yet what a kingdom hath the heart in this,
And what a fortress built against despair —
Here may I bear the wrong too great to bear,
Here may I live again my hour of bliss.

Here are the puny woes and petty stings
Of daily living banished and forgot,
Through ancient palaces that now are not
I sit with princes and I talk with kings.

Here may I greet the world's great noblemen,
Whose words renew the hopes that late were chill.
The olden fire leaps up to light the will
And I am strong to meet the world again.

NO, I HAVE NOT READ IT!

(BEING THE OPEN CONFESSION OF A POET HOUSEKEEPER)

No, I have not read your book,
Nor the clippings you left,
Nor the lists of the world's best literature,
Snowing upon me from a hundred publishers,
Mounting to a mammoth ball with the accumulating years.
I have not even read
The Story of Mankind,
Nor The Outline of History,
Nor Bystander,
Nor The Cradle of the Deep,
Nor the stimulating Memoirs
Of Isadora Duncan.

No, friend, not through hostility,
Not through indifference,
And — may I venture? — not through ignorance
Do I, a poet, fail to keep abreast.
But I started down town to buy Christopher Morley's latest,
And the dumb-waiter bell rang
To announce my groceries;
And the telephone also rang,
And the front doorbell ditto,
While a fearful odor
From the sizzling gas range
Told me that all the water in the kettle
Had escaped to a different dimension,
And I haven't found out yet
Where the Blue Begins,
Because the groceries
Did not belong to me,
But to a family three blocks away —
A family passionately fond of onions
And other robust things. . . .

And I had to sally forth then and there
To correct the error,
Bringing my own parcels home under my cape.
And I had to buy a new kettle,
After answering the telephone fourteen and one-half times;
And letting in the man with the new storm windows,
And showing the cleaning woman
How to remove footprints
From my best hall runner.

No, I haven't read the programs you left,
Nor the twelve poems by your youngest daughter,
For last night I had to mend the fingers of my gloves,

Put snappers on a waist,
Wash eight pairs of hose,
Trim a hat and clean a coat with naphtha.

And this morning I had to go to the bakery for rolls,
And the butcher's for chops,
And autograph five books,
And write nine family letters,
And meet a niece at the railway station,
And take a parcel to the post office to be weighed and
stamped . . .
Which reminds me of another package I forgot to take;
And to-night, if I sit up late,
Sleepy voices all along the line will be calling:
"Good gracious, who's keeping the light burning?
Can't a body *ever* get a bit of sleep?"

No, I have not read your book,
Though I took it on top of a bus with me;
Lugged it into the subway;
Carted it to a tea room;
And finally in desperation
Snatched meanwhile paragraphs
When the clerks were making change
At dry-goods counters.
I bore it proudly to the Ethical Culture Forum,
Going early to the lecture,
And left it on my seat . . . *one second!*
While I jumped up to speak to a friend.
When I turned around, the precious volume
Was GONE!
Literally swiped, utterly taken.
You see how popular, how irresistible,
Your book is.
I am dreaming of a quiet, firelit nook,
Where some day, far from the vortex of the city. . . .
No, I have not read your book!

GIVE ROOM TO YOUTH

I wish all parents knew —
And every guardian too —
What bitter harm they do
Who fail to understand
Youth's agonizing plea,
Youth's vehement demand
For privacy.

I wish all fathers, mothers,
Sisters and aunts and brothers
Could know the grief that smothers
The soul in need of space,
Crying amid this daily whirl of circumstance
For its own breathing place,
Its living chance.

"I must have room to be alone,
To think alone, to grow
The larger self God meant that I should be.
O father, mother, you will never know
How home has hampered me!"

True, it takes money to have rooms enough
That all shall be alone and find content,
And homes are cramped and quarters often rough
Where family life is spent.
But even so, a mother may be kind,
A father may be gentle in his speech
When, soon enough, the growing youngsters find
The need of wider reach.

To grow the highest worth,
Each human soul at birth
Should have the right to privacy on earth,
Unhindered by the pressure of so many others
Who try to sway its course;
Unchecked by fathers, cousins, brothers,
Untouched by force.

I wish all parents knew,
And every guardian too,
What cruel harm they do,
Cramping the living spirit in a crowded space,
Denying to the child its right to room,
Demanding youth to share the bitter place
Where age indulges gloom.

UNHAPPY HOMES

Alas, what sickness dwells
In those benighted hells
Where family torture tells
That half the ills whereof the flesh is prey
Are born within the home where hatred slaughters
The peace of mind and spirit, day by day,
Bringing disease to fretful sons and daughters.

We think a girl is false who runs away,
Nor ask what misery she left behind,
Nor if her parents had the charm to make her stay,
Nor if their ways were kind.
Why treat a boy as if he were a fiend,
A girl as if she were a devil,
Why claim a child her future has demeaned
Who seeks a higher level?

For home is but a travesty of jangled nerves,
Of daily quarrels and relentless tasks,
Without that inner sympathy which serves
And gladly gives the love another asks.
Just love and understanding . . . that is all!
For by that test, the home must stand or fall.

HAPPY SONG OF HOUSEWORK

Like a tulip is this cup,
Yellow when I hold it up
Where the sunlight filters in
Through its fairy petals thin.
This is ringed with ruddy clover
(Wipe it twice and turn it over);
This one, like a morning-glory,
Tells a lovely purple story. . . .
Put the silver at each plate;
Pair by pair and mate with mate.
Salad fork? Yes, that's the one.
Hurry, dear! The chops are done.

When my family's in its place
And we've said our silent grace,
And my boys smile up at me,
I'm as proud as proud can be.
"What a pie! Say, can you beat it?
Melts in your mouth before you can eat it.
Gracious! Look what mother's made —
A pitcher full o' lemonade!
Pass the biscuits — aren't they fine?
No one cooks like mother mine!"

Other folks may wish to be
Movie stars, for all of me.
Girls and women mad for fame
Flicker by me like a flame.
I'm as quiet as a lamb,
Just content with what I am.
Happy with my girls and boys,
With their chatter and their noise;
Seems to me it's piles of fun
Just to get the housework done.

Some folks think that work is wrong;
Life is made for mirth and song.
Some folks think that work is tragic;
Seems to me it's full of magic. . . .
All right, children! Breakfast's ready.
Harry, Susie, Jane and Teddy!
Toast and butter, eggs and ham.
Yes, I'm happy as I am!

O WOMEN, TELL ME

(TO THE AMBITIOUS WOMEN OF THIS AGE)

O women, tell me — you who seek for praise
Within the crowded halls of latter days,
Who lay your early dreams of love aside
To tread with man the hectic paths of pride —
Of all your deeds is anything so fair
As stroking with the hand a baby's hair?

O women, look you where the noise and steam
Obscure the tender vision and the dream.
Love's fragile garden trampled in the fight,
Your bloom of triumph holds the seed of blight.
For cold Ambition's lips but seldom seek
The velvet petal of a baby's cheek.

O women, well I know the cause you name
Not sordidly for shekels, pomp or fame,
But with the mother love that spans the earth
Your labor brings the golden age to birth —
O mother souls! I know! I know! And yet
Love bids me plead with you: "Do not forget!"

A GUEST TO HER HOSTESS

The rose upon my morning tray,
 The pansied plate, the creamy cup;
Silver and glass that greet the day
 And gather all its glory up. . . .
These things bespeak a friend's true heart,
 These tokens all her love confess;
I shall remember, when we part,
 Her thoughtful care, her graciousness!

THE HOUSEWIFE WAITS

The threads go in, the threads go out,
Over the heel and round about;
There's nothing speeds the hours away
Like darning stockings, so they say.
The threads go in and out and under. . . .
Well, what's keeping him, I wonder?
Dinner's steaming in the pot;
He knows I always keep it hot,
But then it's such a shame that he
Can't have it as it ought to be.

The threads go in, the threads go out —
I'm not the wife to scold or doubt;
He knows I'll never say a thing
Or nag him with my questioning.
How clean and sharp the window shines,
All flecked with honeysuckle vines;
How blue the rug, how white the floor,
How neat the curtains at the door!
Let other wives their homes neglect —
My home was fashioned for respect.

The threads go out, the threads go in —
Now thicker where the warp is thin;
Another stitch to make it fast —
I'll darn 'em so the toes will last.
The threads go in, the threads go out,
Over the heel and round about.
So goes my man upon his way,
So travels he from day to day;
Away from home, then back again —
He shares the common lot of men.

The threads go in and out and under . . .
Dusk has come, and still I wonder.
Many a heart is comforted
The way these holes are healed with thread.
Well, men are all alike, it seems.
We women dress 'em up in dreams . . .
Why, here he comes! Oh, me! Oh, me!
I'll fly and fix a pot of tea.
O Tom, I thought you'd never come.
It's fine to see you — welcome home!

WHEN MOTHER'S BAKING BREAD

When mother's baking bread,
The house is warm and good —
Every one is kindly if we only understood!
Little pools of sunshine
On the kitchen floor,
All the children hovering
About the oven door.
Pansies in the window
Blinking at the sun . . .
Everybody waiting till the bread gets done!

Fragrance has a color
As sure as you are born;
Baking day is wonderful
As golden bantam corn,
Darkening to beauty
Rich and brown and deep,
Cheering up the children
When mother lets them peep . . .
"Bless your hearts, my darlings,
For I love you every one!"
Everybody waiting till the bread is done.

When mother's baking bread,
The floor is scrubbed and clean—
She doesn't make a bit of fuss,
For mother isn't mean—
"Watch your tracks, my chickens,
Put some papers down!"
We run to do it quickly,
For our mother doesn't frown.

"Butter's in the icebox,
Jam is on the shelf.
Go and get it, Bessie,
You can help yourself!"
Now the time approaches,
The oven door is wide . . .
"Goodness gracious, children,
What a treat's inside!"
"Mummy, you're a treasure!"
They shout it, every one . . .
For everybody's happy when the bread gets done.

Section X

HUMAN BEINGS

THE HUMAN TOUCH

London was mist-bound. Hours and days went by
With sorry comfort from the leaden sky,
With moods of heaviness, wherein I lay
Despairing, in the grip of each dull day. . . .

When suddenly, the pull of human things
Roused me from lethargy. As if on wings
I sped along the shop-enchanted street
With music in my heart and in my feet.

I bought a pound of goodies, cake and jam;
Butter and eggs, biscuit and cheese and ham.
I met my neighbors gayly doing the same,
And in my soul was lit the olden flame.

How strange that simple things like buying bread
Should start the sun to shining overhead!
For London still was wrapped in sullen mist,
Though in my heart were fires of amethyst.

SONG OF SUMMER DAYS

What a lot of good things
Summer brings to me—
Picnics, firecrackers, iced tea;
Crisp white dresses with a sash to tie—
Ever do it properly? Neither can I!
Mother seems to fix most any kind of bow;
Now I come to think of it, how do mothers know?
"What's the matter, dearie? Wait a moment . . . there!
Everything's perfect from your feet to your hair."

Summer brings a lot of lovely things to me,
How I wish that Winter didn't have to be!
Moonlight and honeysuckle, dew on the grass,
Ice cream and lemonade to make the hours pass;
Movies in the open when the day's work's done,
All the dishes put away, dried, every one.
Some folks would let 'em wait, some folks would not;
We'd rather any other task should be forgot.
Dishes seem to look at you, just as if they said:
"Heavy, heavy hangs over thy poor head!"

Summer brings a lot of things to be thankful for.
Yes, I know there's tragedy and suffering and war,
But always something beautiful to take away the blight,
With birds in the daytime, and fireflies at night.
Autumn may be wonderful, Spring may be fair,
But give to me the Summer with my elbows bare,
With locusts a-shrilling in the noonday heat
And a thin breeze coming kind o' warm and sweet . . .
With long tree shadows in the afternoon
And the lawn mower singing its familiar tune.
Take the other seasons, so you leave to me
Summertime, honeysuckle, iced tea!

THE ICE MAN TRIES PSYCHOLOGY

The ice man lingers at the kitchen door,
Tells us things we didn't know before —
Keeps his weather eye on the street outside
Where clamoring urchins scheme for a ride.
"Hey there! Better get a move on — quick!"
Sounds his burly warning to Harry and Dick.
"Madam, your bill is just eleven twenty-two —
Got to watch an' see what them kids'll do —
Yes'm. Thank you, madam. It's a very warm day —
Just the kind o' morning melts the ice away.

"Shrinkage! You'd ought to see the sun beat down,
Peltin' on the wagon as I drive through town.
Sure, the ice is weighed again, when I hurry back —
Boss forever lookin' for the loss an' the lack.
Say! Did you ever stop to wonder why
The ice man greets you with a worried eye?
Let me tell you, lady, it's a pretty tough game,
A hard way to travel to the Hall of Fame!
People seem to figure there's nothin' but play
For a man to be a-cartin' of ice all day.

"A-cartin' round ice an' fixin' up accounts —
Women always fussin', whatever it amounts —
Women always bickering about a few cents.
Can't a body show a bit of confidence?
Take a man, for instance — why, he pays right off!
Hand him out your figurin' an' that's enough.
He shovels out the coin, an' we sign the receipt —
Everything transacted just as smooth an' neat!
But show me a woman who'll limber up an' pay
When the ice bill's presented on the judgment day!

"Why, women seem possessed to find a cent gone wrong —
Poor things! Can't blame 'em, for their brains ain't strong.
That's why, madam, when I reach this place
It's kinda like a bracer just to see your face.
You're *not like a woman* in the way you deal,
You pay me like a gentleman, right off the reel —
Hi there! Bless me if them boys ain't slick,
Hangin' to my wagon like the very Old Nick!
Thank you, thank you, madam! Yes, a very fine day —
But — just the kind o' morning melts the ice away!"

"LOST AND FOUND"

If I had children, there's one thing I'd train them to:
I'd try to help them see another's view.
I'd make them look beyond that narrow shelf
Of whims and comforts called the personal self.
I'd make the little sisters and their brothers
Grow up to take some interest in others.
They'd have to care for fellows in distress,
And really want another's happiness.

To-day, across the telephone, a drawl
Of indolence made answer to my call.
I'd lost a coat. What mattered it to *her,*
Whether of cloth or astrakhan or fur . . .
The coat was mine, not hers. She cared no whit
Whether I found or ne'er recovered it.
"Yes, madam" . . . I could hear her chewing gum . . .
"No, madam, not a single coat has come.
What's that? The name again . . . I didn't hear . . .
Just fancy, Bess! He called me 'Little Dear.'
He begged to kiss me, but of course I played
And teased him just as if I was afraid . . .
No, madam. Haven't seen a single coat . . .
And listen, Bess! He sent the sweetest note . . .
I tell you, madam, not a thing's been found.
Perhaps your chauffeur dropped it on the ground . . .
All right — all right. Just give me the address . . .
Say, listen here! I want to talk to Bess . . .

"Oh, ye-ah. Ye-ah. Yes. Uh-hum. Uh-hum."
Again I seemed to hear her chewing gum —
"The collar was of mink — No? Not the kind?
Well, madam, such a coat we do not find.
No, not a thing. But you can leave your name.
I'll tell the office manager you came. . .
Oh, dear!" Another pert, impatient cough.
"Oh, plague these pesky women . . . ring her off!"

If I had children, I'd not lose a minute,
But teach them bright and early to begin it —
Just courtesy and kindness . . . very small,
And yet the great possession, after all!

THE SWIMMING LESSON

Look! I can swim!
The sea is tame before my touch —
The waters I have feared so much
Run forth to help, not hinder, me . . .
I'm just as buoyant as can be.
Why, water's just as safe as land!
At last, at last I understand . . .
I always thought it just a whim
That everyone was wild to swim.
I used to think with such despair
Of ever swimming anywhere;
I felt I never could learn how,
It seemed so dangerous — but now . . .
Why, water's just a different air,
A sort of liquid atmosphere.
To think I ever was afraid!
I scarcely need a bit of aid.

See — I can swim!
I'm not afraid to go quite far,
Out where the biggest breakers are.
Oh, dear! To think of what I missed
When I sat idly playing whist,
And knitting sweaters day by day . . .
No, no! Don't take your hand away —
That's better . . . just a little fright,
But now again I'm quite all right.

Look! I can swim!
The sea is like a silver cup
Whose green, green waters bear me up—
'Twill never spill me anywhere . . .
And if it did, I wouldn't care.
I wouldn't care what happened here,
It seems impossible to fear . . .
What are you doing? Wait . . . wait!
Don't go and leave me to my fate!
Help — murder . . . come, somebody, quick!
Oh, dear! I'm shaky, and so sick . . .
I didn't dream the waves could spread
So suddenly above my head . . .
Oh, no! I'm not at all afraid . . .
You see, I need so little aid.

Well, I can swim!
I'm just as light and free as air
When I'm out in the water there . . .
And still, it's nice on land again . . .
Within the world of living men.
Swimming's so easy when you try . . .
Let's come to-morrow, then? Good-bye!

THE GAME OF LIFE

The joy of the game
Depends strictly on whether
You're outside or in it.
The zest and the flame
Come when you begin it.
When without, you look on,
Indifferent, dull,
Saying, "Childish, absurd!"
Then, after a lull,

Your lethargy gone,
You retract your harsh word . . .
Ah, the soul of the test
Is in joining your veins with the rest!

How can a bachelor know
What makes the glad world go?
Myriad looms that ply,
Myriad wheels that fly
Fashioning clothes and toys
For precious girls and boys?
How can a spinster guess
How busy mothers dress
And bathe and nurse and tend,
With dozens of things to mend . . .
With small hands clinging tight,
Hearts bursting with delight?

And then the passionate fun
Of the morning's race with the sun,
With work that calls and calls —
It's a life that never palls!
And before you know it, noon
Comes galloping up so soon,
And the children are at the gate,
And lunch must not be late. . .
How can the childless know
The thrust, the sting, the glow,
Ah, who can feel all this
Unless she's part of the bliss?

For . . . the joy of the game
Depends strictly on whether you're in, or outside!
Untouched by the flame,
'Tis easy enough to deride —
Ah, the soul of the test
Is in joining your veins with the rest!

WHO COMES AROUND THE CORNER?

Who comes around the corner?
A prince with banners fair,
A beggar with his empty purse,
A queen with gold to spare?

Who comes around the corner?
I watch from dawn till eve
To find who goes rejoicing
Though other men may grieve.

Who comes around the corner?
My lover and my mate,
Whose soul was fashioned for my own
In the crucible of fate?

Who comes around the corner—
A friend or bitter foe?
If Life would only warn us first,
If we could only know!

And yet the very tease of Life
That keeps us questioning;
The tang, the joy, the eagerness
To find what she may bring,

Is proof that Life is very wise
And knows her purpose well. . . .
Who comes around the corner?
Another day will tell!

SOAP DISH PHILOSOPHY

The white soap in the soap dish,
Who is delicate and demure,
Has a foaming creed
That what folks need
Is just to be prim and pure.

She will frown on the faintest perfume,
Or the least fond touch of red;
At the slightest glance
Of sweet romance
She will grimly shake her head.

Now the violet soap, who is next her,
Departs from her neighbor's views;
But she has her say
In a modest way
When they meet to discuss the news.

Oh, haven't you heard the gossip
That seethes in a dish of soap,
When the water sings
And the lather stings
As your blinded way you grope?

For the ruby soap and the yellow,
The pink and the luscious brown
Are not at all
What one would call
The exclusive folks of the town.

"My dear, it is painful, really!
I would blush were I not so white!
That vulgar bloom
And that gay perfume
Would shatter one's morals quite."

Said the violet one, with humor:
"All soaps were not made the same.
Were we all one kind
We should some day find
That living had grown quite tame.
I've a kind of an intuition
That, if only we understood,
The dashing airs
Miss Pink Soap wears
Might hearten and do us good!
That perhaps, if we only knew it" . . .

But White Soap uttered a groan.
"When I think of the cost!
Our prestige lost
And our high traditions flown!
It is tragic to think I came here
To this mixed, impossible set.
Oh, for a place
To hide my face
And this ugly dream forget!"

It is said Fate really gives us
The true wish of our heart.
In less than a day
The white soap lay
On a closet shelf apart.

Unsought, unheard, she lingered
Through Spring and the Summer heat.
Dry as a bone
She lived alone
In haughtiness complete.

Till the housewife chanced to find her,
And laughed as glad folks may:
"Here's a piece of soap
Like a dead, dead hope.
Here goes! I'll throw it away."

LIKE HUMAN BEINGS

(TREES AT NIGHT)

In the Grove

Some trees are like masked men, waiting around dark corners
To jump out at you.
Others have a protecting attitude, as of arms raised in tender guardianship.
Some are like fawns, shying away from you behind the lilac hedges,
And you feel the shining of their unseen eyes, dark, timid and adorable.
Some are like elves of the wood, whirling intangible drapery about their young and elusive limbs.
They dance in dim and beautiful aloofness, amid the shadows of a fairy stage
Ringed round with myriad electric bulbs the fireflies bring.

The Street Maple

At night, in a suburban town, I love to look from my bedroom window
Upon a goodly tree which stands beneath the arc light at the corner.
It is a human tree, plain, delightful, comradely . . .
Just a street maple in ordinary dress,
Whose notched leaves have the common freshness and simplicity
Of other maples.
But oh, in the electric radiance, what transfiguration! . . .

I lie awake in my cot-bed near the window,
And stare upon this tree and am comforted;
I talk to her, my confidante,
For she is like a mother, white and protecting in the night,

And in the morning she will rise early, before I am stirring.
I shall hear the kettle singing and smell the appetizing fragrance
Of biscuits browning in the oven.
The wonderful aroma of coffee will be wafted to me,
And I shall hear her calling to me that it is "time to be up!" . . .

THESE PEOPLE

These people all with whom we dwell,
Whose hearts we think we know so well,
We know them not at all unless
We hear the dreams their souls confess.

No man is "common" if we look
Deep in his heart's own hallowed book,
Where sacred history is told
In flaming letters of pure gold.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow!"
Thus rings the hymn our people know;
Oh, could we praise mankind as well,
What thrones would rise where paupers dwell!

What songs would burst from throats now dumb;
What fires would leap where faith is numb;
What gifts would bloom that else had died,
What loves, too cruelly denied!

Oh, let us lift, nor spire nor dome,
But cleanly halls and spacious home;
Bring noble justice to all lands —
Such be the praise God understands!

Section XI

"KIDDIES"

SOME FOLKS SAY WE CAN'T REMEMBER

Some folks say we can't remember
Back as far as two years old;
I recall one keen December
Night of blue and bitter cold.
Firelight wavered on the ceiling,
Firelight made my pillow red,
Love and tenderness revealing
In the forms beside my bed.

"Have the flannels warm and ready,"
Whispered one whose voice I knew.
"Hold the baby *so*. Now, steady,
Do it as I tell you to.
B'ess um's little heart — it's over.
Bath is done. All clean and sweet!
Nurse, she's like a bit of clover —
(Careful, now, and dry her feet!)
Now, we'll tuck her in and let her
Watch the lamplight on the wall.
(Nurse, I think it would be better
If you hovered within call.)
Hush-a-bye! Her lids are drooping,
She'll be off before we know."
Then the form above me stooping
Hid the lovely firelight glow.

"Hush-a-bye! Oh, dear, she's crying.
Something's wrong." They did not guess
(Though they puzzled long with trying)
Just the cause of my distress.
All at once I ceased my screaming,
Gave a gurgle of delight;
Beauty through the world was streaming,
Shadows curled in crimson light.

Even now I almost feel it
As I must have felt it then;
And I wish my heart could steal it,
Live it over once again.

Some folks say we can't remember
Back so far, but I shall hold
Pictures of that dark December
When the wall was red and gold.
Drowsily a voice repeating
Words long hushed in memory's choir:
"Have the baby's flannels heating
Fresh and cosy by the fire!"

TO "EMMY LOU'S" PHOTOGRAPH

Emmy Lou, Emmy Lou,
I've just beheld a photograph of you!
Though I knew you must be sweet,
I'm quite taken off my feet
To find my mental picture more than true.

When they told me you had lighted on this planet,
I said: "She'll be a princess, through and through!"
And though many babes I've seen,
You are such a little queen,
I've got to write a "poem" straight to you.

Emmy Lou, Emmy Lou,
There's something in your look I can't explain . . .
There's a fine elusive grace
In the curving of your face
And to try to paint your virtues would be vain.
There's a something back of eyes or brow or features,
A magic, individual and rare,
That sets you quite apart from other creatures,
And puts a sort of halo round your hair.

Emmy Lou, Emmy Lou,
No wonder they are all in love with you!
Though I've never seen your eyes,
Well, it wouldn't cause surprise
If I found that they were blue,
Emmy Lou!

But whether brown or azure, as I view them
I see the tender glory of their glance;
I know the amber light that sparkles through them,
And I can guess how glee will make them dance.
Your nurse is very happy, and she shows it;
She shelters you so proudly in her arms.
You're looking like an angel, and she knows it,
For oh, she dearly dotes upon your charms.

Emmy Lou, Emmy Lou,
You strengthen and inspire me, yes you do!
For the sweetness of your birth
Brings a freshness to the earth,
Where all my dreams are shining glad and new.
You're a promise out of Paradise this minute,
You hearten me and help me to be strong;
I shall face the hardest morning and begin it
With lifting up my spirit into song;
Shall know that He whose love has formed your beauty
Has made the world, and He will see it through.
So while I keep the upward path of duty,
I'll bless your little heart, Emmy Lou!

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SECRET OF THE MOON

(A CHILD'S FANCY)

Where does the sky foam disappear?
What becomes of the fleecy white
When day is done and the lamps are near
And clouds have vanished across the night?

Oh, didn't you know that a radiant throng
 Of heavenly children are hard at play,
Blowing bubbles the whole night long
 Out of the sky foam of the day?

Blowing bubbles adown the dark
 From slender, wispy, ethereal stems —
Bubbles that shatter in spray and spark
 Till all the sky is ablaze with gems?
But look! There is one that endures the test,
 Rounding unbroken upon the sight,
Balancing sheer on the hill's high crest,
 A shimmering, beautiful bubble of light.

O wonderful moon! From your place on high,
 Won't you tell of the children who romp and play,
Blowing bubbles the whole night long
 Out of the sky foam of the day?
How does it happen that you alone
 Shine so steady and soft and fair,
But all the others are gayly blown
 To scatter like diamonds in the air?

THE REASON

Come, baby dear! I wish you'd tell
Just why you scream so and rebel.
Now, now! What is it all about —
Why pins and flannels make you shout
And why you yell and grow so red
At splash of water on your head.
Tell us, you sprite from distant sphere,
What is the terror that you fear?

I can't believe that one so sweet,
With such dear, dimpled hands and feet
Could put us all in such distress
Without good reason. Now confess!

Is it because our world is rough
And you are used to softer stuff?
Don't they have water, soap and things,
Don't they have cribs and mattress springs
On that far planet whence you came?
I wonder if it's not the same!
I think we've guessed it, darling one —
Wee stranger from a distant sun!
You're used to such ethereal things —
To pillows made of fairies' wings,
To fabrics curiously spun
From out the substance of the sun.

They lathered you in clouds of snow
And bathed you in the morning's glow
And then you laughed in glee because
They clothed you in a gown of gauze
Made from a little wand'ring wind —
It was the gentlest they could find.
You played in sand spread overnight
From star dust of a meteor's flight.
You climbed a rainbow, found the gold —
All that your chubby hands could hold.
Then off to bed, tucked in so deep,
With stars to sing you fast asleep.

Well, then, how stupid it must be
Down on the earth with such as we!
Is this the reason that you cry,
Poor little stranger from the sky?
No wonder you refuse them flat —
Flannels and pins and things like that.

Hush, precious one — it is enough.
Trust to our love — we'll not be rough.
We'll give you every lavish care
The while you breathe our grosser air.
But promise not to leave us, dear —
Wee stranger from another sphere!

TO A WOMAN KNITTING

(ON THE HOTEL VERANDA)

The woman who gathers the hues of the dawn in her bag —
Rosy wool, creamy wool, snowy wool, tag after tag —
What a forest of pictures she brings;
What a heaven of exquisite things!
Though framed in the glow of a green, drowsy day,
Fair pictures of Winter before her are flitting;
And memories come that are far, far away
From the midsummer scene where she sits with her knitting.

She nods to the needles, she chuckles and smiles —
And presto! I travel to strange distant places;
I journey with her through the hot, dusty miles
To the Santa Claus country of dear, chubby faces.
I kiss, as she kisses, the satin-bright heads;
I stand, as she stands, by the small, snowy beds;
"A muffler for Tom and a muffler for Sue;
Two hoods for the kiddies, a warm little jacket;
A red tam o' shanter, and red mittens, too,
And stockings galore in the gayly tied packet!"
Ah, coast as they may down the steep, snowy hill,
Her love, it has folded them safely from harm.
King Winter must bow to dear grandmother's skill,
And blindly obey a mysterious charm.

The woman who gathers the hues of the dawn in her bag —
Amber wool, snowy wool, crimson wool, dearest of dyes —
What matter to her how the long, lazy Summer may drag?
Her hours are as swift as the eloquent needle that flies,
Her days are as sweet as the dream of a baby asleep;
And she hums as she thinks how the darling will cuddle so deep
In the soft little nest that her magical fingers have made.
And I smile as I watch her at work in the clean Summer shade,
For I know, as she knows, that the greatest of all life's reaping
Lies there where the child is sleeping.
And the goal of the world, and the fruit of its rapturous good,
Is the dear baby face that is blooming from grandmother's hood.

SONG OF CLEANLINESS

(FOR CHILDREN)

Look! Behold us, fresh and sweet,
Washed and trimmed from head to feet,
From the bath all spick and span,
We are helping Nature's plan!

Like the lily, like the rose,
Like the brook that brightly flows,
Like the dawn so fresh and clean,
Like the noontide's radiant sheen.

Rouse yourselves, O idle folk
Bound so long by habit's yoke,
Frayed and dusty while you dream,
Rise and seek the cleansing stream!

Try for Heaven if you please,
Pray to God upon your knees,
God shall answer you and say:
"*Did you take your bath to-day?*
Did you do the daily chores,
Wash the shelves and scour the floors?
Have you cleansed your hands as well?"
(And He knows before you tell!)

Though our *souls* are washed from sin,
Nothing soiled should enter in.
Brush the corners, clean the paint—
That's the way to rear a saint.
Washing powders of the best,
Disinfectants and the rest,
All are holy, for they make
Health and joy for beauty's sake.

Fill with joy your idle tub,
Praise your Maker while you scrub,
Tingling hot from water's cold,
Thanks for bounties manifold.
Thanks for towels, brushes, combs;
Thanks for soap within our homes;
Thanks for windows that shall shine . . .
Thus are mortals made divine!

CHILDREN IN THE PARK

They bring a radiance to the gloomy air,
Such merry gold, we need not miss the sun.
Through somber rain their faces are as fair
As orchards are when April has begun.
Their cherry cheeks and honey-colored curls,
Their laughter, thrilling as the joyous lark;
Oh, summer's chime of ecstasy unfurls
On winter days, with children in the park.

The wheeling gulls are white upon the pond,
For crumbs are plenty where the youngsters walk;
Bright fairies they with wings and golden wand—
(So say the birds, if we could hear them talk!)
Ho! Saucy Puck, with pink and naked knees.
Hail! Sweet Titania lighting up the dark.
I, too, shall dance with you among the trees,
On winter days find summer in the park.

DON'T CRY FOR THE MOON

A Mother to Her Child

Don't cry for the moon, my baby boy!
Would you take from another his precious toy?
A little sky laddie is wild with glee
Just as my darling boy would be
If he were sailing a bright balloon
Gold and gay as the August moon.
Oh, the sky balloon is tied to a string—
A glittering, flittering, gossamer thing—
Woven of threads too fine for sight,
For no one has seen it by day or night,
And a cherub child who is just like you,
Tugs at the cord, as you would do.

Look! You can see him in yonder cloud,
Floating his prize with fingers proud . . .
See how he gathers the silver string
Under the fold of his feathery wing.
Mortals who saw it would likely say
That only a moonbeam could shine that way.
Bye, baby . . . bye-o-bye!
We cannot capture the moon so high,

But we may watch till its rim goes down
Over the roofs of the dusky town;
Or we may walk in its silver beams
That guide our feet to the Land o' Dreams!

* * * *

Life to Her Tearful Children

Don't cry for the moon, O human child,
Nor blame the Creator with curses wild
If you cannot crush in your mortal hand
The glowing Dream with its fairy strand!
Who knows if its beauty would shine so fair
If tethered close to the earthly care?
Who knows but the gossamer web would snap
And ashes fall in your human lap
If you sought to capture its lovely gold
In the foolish grasp of a mortal's hold?

Your angel self, with its white, white wings,
Will guard forever the angel things.
Safe and fair in the glowing sky,
She holds the treasures for which you sigh,
And swings the Dream like a lantern bright
To guide your feet with its heavenly light.

GOD'S VELVET

(THE THOUGHT OF A CHILD)

I sometimes think the grass is made
That angels may be unafraid,
Winging to earth at night or dawn,
God's velvet they may tread upon.

And moss, a thing so beautiful,
Glossy as silk and rich as wool,
Deeply and delicately spread,
Is fashioned for an angel's head.

When noiseless night, like satin flung,
From branch to tender branch is hung,
I gaze across the dark and try
To see her floating down the sky —
My guardian angel, tall and white,
Who watches over me at night.
I whisper to her in my sleep,
"No matter if the hills are steep,
The jagged rocks you need not fear —
God's carpet stretches far and near,
And where Heaven's fleecy pathways end,
Lo, the soft earth shall be your friend!"

INFANT MAN

(TO GEORGE BUCKLEY WARDER, THIRD)

The miracle of worlds made new
You shelter in your tiny breast;
The Law that raised the mountain crest
Is not more wonderful than you.

The mystery of sod and grain,
The marvel of an eagle's flight,
The majesty of morning light —
All, all are centered in your brain.

You hide within you, like a seed,
The history of stone and star;
Of cataclysms fierce and far —
The atom's whirl, the planet's speed.

Orion with his kingly train,
And Saturn, rimmed with holy fire,
Are comrades to your heart's desire,
Nor shall they summon you in vain.

You focus in your little span,
So gently poised, so softly furled,
The power that could shake the world —
Yet you are but an infant man.

A bundle frail, absurdly small,
You hold a splendor so intense,
Had I but gems or frankincense
In worship would I give them all.

You hold the living firmament
Unbroken, in your small embrace;
And looking in your starry face
I find the Creator's whole intent.

As leaves that burst upon the vine,
As thrust of blossoms pushing through,
I owe my quickened life to you;
The magic of your birth is mine!

NOW I KNOW!

I used to wonder so
What made the eyes of mothers glad,
Whether the father's luck was good or bad,
As over the same monotonous round they'd go —
Sewing and baking, washing and all the rest;
Holding an ailing child against the breast;
Never a murmur, never a complaint
Though I in watching them grew worn and faint.

But oh, to-day within the early morn
I heard the helpless cry of my firstborn —
The dearest sound that Nature can bestow —
And now I know!

I used to say
Fathers who toiled for little girls and boys,
Giving their lives to buy them bread and toys,
Were strong in some mysterious kind of way.
A power held them up and made them glow;
A steady flame of purpose seemed to flow
Through body, mind and spirit — though it tired
My very soul to see them so inspired.
But oh, this morning in the early chill
I heard a wailing cry, and felt the thrill
Of feeble hands that would not let me go. . . .
And now I know!

Section XII

"LOVELY WOMAN"

"LOVELY WOMAN"

That you shall be dressed in a gossamer gown,
With pearls for your fingers and plumes for your head,
That you shall be feathered and pampered and fed,
A thunder of traffic is heard in the town.

Oh, millions must work in the cold and the heat
And thousands must suffer and many must die
That you shall be charming and sweet to the eye,
With beads for your bodice and silk for your feet.

To bring you a delicate veil for your face
The peace of the morning is shattered with noise;
That you shall have beauty and culture and poise
The city is robbed of its beauty and grace.

Oh, Bedlam is loose in the heart of the town
When bale upon bale from the caravan comes;
'Tis fiercer than armies and louder than drums . . .
That you shall be dressed in a gossamer gown.

The sea is your servant, the forests obey
The wish of your heart or the wave of your hand;
The beasts of the jungle are yours to command;
The bird and the reptile forever your prey.

A myriad shops in the highway are lit,
The brain is bewildered, the senses astir;
For window on window but beckons to her
Whose wishes and wiles are the reason of it.

O mothers of men who have suffered so much,
O women whose wrongs have been heavy and sore,
The whip of the centuries stings you no more,
The earth is your vassal and moves at your touch.

The earth is your vassal, to bring you renown;
And man is your slave, who shall do as you bid;
No longer your queenly inheritance hid,
You conquer the world in your gossamer gown!

SHOES IN THE MORNING

The white shoe turns to greet her russet neighbor,
The patent pump is winking at the sun;
Another day has brought its round of labor,
The frenzy of another week begun.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! My very shanks are paining.
I hope she'll oversleep and let me rest.
But then, there's never any use complaining —
Who cares a rap when tired shoes protest?"

"You've said it! That's the gospel truth you're voicing!"
Cried white and bronze and black beneath the bed.
The sandal shook her buckles in rejoicing,
Then — "Hush! I hear her stirring overhead."

"She'll soon be getting up for her adorning —
I hope she'll wait awhile to try her shoes!
Sometimes it really takes her half the morning
To look us over thoroughly and choose."

"She scuffed my toe when last she went a-tramping,
And scraped my side against a wretched rock;
The foolish country youth she had been vamping
Had kissed her — and it gave her such a shock!"

"I wouldn't care how many youths had kissed her,
How many times they sat to spoon and talk;
But I'm a size to fit her little sister . . .
My pain commences when she starts to walk!"

"She *knows* her feet are far too fat to stand it;
Oh, dear, I wish we martyred shoes could squeal!
Why can't we get together and demand it,
And start a revolution, toe and heel?"

"Look out! She's getting up. . . . I hear her rising.
Now all together, let us call her down!
I think it wouldn't be a bit surprising
If we could form a union . . . in this town."

Plump Madeline arose with sleepy sighing:
"Oh, dear, my shoes are mixed and tumbled so!
There simply isn't any use in trying. . . .
I thought I placed them nicely in a row!"

But soon she had composed her pretty features,
Nor did it enter once her golden head
That shoes have tongues like other human creatures . . .
And revolution raged beneath the bed!

I LIKE TO DO EMBROIDERY

I like to do embroidery!
It seems to set my spirit free;
It smooths my tangled wishes out
And rids my soul of care and doubt.

When blues or bores would conquer me
I like to do embroidery.
My neighbor's talk is tame, but I
Have silken daisies 'neath my eye.

My nimble needle winks and shines:
"You needn't hear her when she whines!
She'll stay the afternoon, perhaps;
She'll tell you of her late relapse,

The cook's departure yesterday. . . .
Just nod and let her fire away."

I like to do embroidery!
It fills me with an ecstasy,
A high, creative, sweet command
That thrills my heart and nerves my hand.
And something in me seems to sing
That I am one with God and Spring,
That even so His ardors run
When buds and blossoms have begun.

I wonder, is it Nature's way?
Is Spring just Nature's time to play?
When Winter-worn, she cries: "Ah, me,
I'd like to do embroidery!"

OBEYING ORDERS

When a woman seeks a carnation to twine in her hair,
When a woman with decoration would make herself fair,
Say not she is trivial, thoughtless or proud or vain;
Say not she is empty of wit who would scorn to be plain.
When a woman with beautiful eyes looks up at her lover—
Lo, she is answering swiftly a summons above her.
Lo, there is secretly sounding a clarion Word
By other ears unheard.

She is obeying orders — orders greater than we may know.
See! There goes a jeweled rosette and there a bow!
Little she dreams of the infinite pattern planned;
Little she knows how she follows a larger command . . .
Fiat of Nature or love or whatever you please,
Purpose of hidden forces finer than these —
Call it the human will or the Will Divine,
Something beyond your understanding or mine.

She is obeying a Word high up, my friend . . .
(You nor I nor any other may see the end.)
All we know is the eloquent lover's sigh,
Leap of the olden flame from eye to eye;
These, together at last, shall be as one;
Once again the cycle of joy begun . . .
Out of their love new lives, new worlds shall spring,
Out of their quest the Future's quest have answering.

She who would find a carnation to put in her hair,
She who would fashion a shimmering garment to wear,
Never believe she is foolish or vain or weak —
Life through her would summon a way to speak!
Buckle your shoe, dear maid . . . be fair as you will.
Beauty and Life are shaking this planet still!

A WOMAN BELOVED

A woman beloved has the hearts of the world for her dwelling;
A woman beloved has the song of the world in her heart.
The sagas of earth, new found, are hers for the telling;
The riddle is done; its answer hers to impart.

A woman beloved has the herb for humanity's healing;
A woman beloved has the cure for humanity's woe.
A promise, a clasp, and a kiss, with sudden revealing,
Have helped her to know.

O cynical souls, who turn from the meek with derision,
Bend low to your knees; humility's portion is yours,
For one and one only may bring you the beauty of vision —
It is found in the eyes of the woman who loves and adores.

IN THE GARDEN OF PEOPLE

In the garden of people,
In the world's own garden of wonderful women and girls,
You may hearken a voice that purls,
Running along like sweet and silver water,
Singing a tune to every listening daughter:
"Be fair as the fairest rose,
Give the maiden a flush that glows,
Put lily dust on shoulder, brow and cheek—
Let the wisdom of beauty speak!"

Can this be, after all, what Nature's after—
Is this her voice that runs along like laughter?
Is this her ardent word to me, to you:
"Oh, carry further what I strove to do!
Oh, carry, carry on, nor be content
Till all the ways of loveliness are spent."
Is this the Why of ribbons, plumes and curls,
In the garden of people,
The garden of women and girls?

CLOTHES

Clothes, clothes, clothes!
Clothes till the senses tire;
Hats and hose and shoes and veiling,
Feathers flaunting, tassels trailing;
Belts and ties and beads and fur,
"Dangles" tinkling after her . . .
And yet beneath this whirl of dress
The passion of the world's distress;
The dream of spirits that aspire,
The ecstasy of heart's desire.

Clothes, clothes, clothes!
And how did it all begin?
Hats and hose and shoes and wings,
Purses, bags and beaded things . . .
Pocketbooks and gay umbrellas,
Silks for modern Cinderellas . . .
Yet beneath this giddy show
The hearts of all the nation go;
I hear them in the rhythmic beat
Of shoes upon the city street.

Clothes, clothes, clothes!
Fashioned for woman and man;
Under each hat a purpose,
Under each coat a plan.
Below the feather and the frill,
A joy, a sorrow or a thrill;
For all are carriers of dreams
And naught is foolish as it seems.
Satins, fringes, buckles, laces,
Brims that shade a myriad faces . . .
Masks that say where'er I go
That life is deeper than we know!

WOMEN'S FOOLISH FEET

Before Buying

"Women's foolish feet!"
How crazily they go
Along the frozen street,
Through stinging wind or snow.
For cold they have no care,
No cringing or dismay.
I wonder how they dare
Conduct themselves that way!

I'll ask at every shop
For shoes of different make . . .
I'll never limp and hop
For silly Fashion's sake.

Tempted

"Women's foolish feet!"
"But, madam — look, I pray,
How stylish and how neat
When *you* are shod that way.
Just stand before the glass,
Behold how trim and small.
You'll take them, madam? Yes.
Just twenty — that is all!"

After Buying

"Women's foolish feet,"
And mine among the rest!
We gad the frozen street
At Fashion's gay behest.
In stockings light as air,
Unheedful of display. . . .
Oh, how do women dare
Conduct themselves that way?

THE BEAUTY SEEKERS

The Thin One

Folks say that if a person will eat
Plenty of fat and plenty of sweet,
All one's bones'll be covered o'er
Thick as plush on the parlor floor.
Well! I've tried with all my might,
Napped all day and slept all night,
Can't get flesh to come my way
'Spite of all the people say!

The Plump One

Well, I've tramped till I ache and ache,
I've trudged and toiled for beauty's sake,
I've climbed the mountains, plied the oar,
Swung the bells till I'm stiff and sore.
Swimming, diving, tennis, "goff" —
Nothing takes the plumpness off!

Miss Freckles

Plenty of cream and plenty of milk
Makes complexion soft as silk;
Spread it thickly ere you sleep,
If a lovely skin you'd keep.
Yet in spite of all I've done,
Still I count them, one by one!

All Together

Oh, won't some person tell us why
Men are honored till they die?
Whether fat or lean or tall,
Bushy hair or none at all;
Freckled, furrowed, matters not!
All man's failings are forgot;
Woman loves him as he is,
Loves his faults because they're his.
Husbands, lovers! Let us be
Free and glad as you are free!

THE DOLL IN THE WINDOW

She turned upon her golden-slippered foot,
A fascinating figure, dressed in red.
"How cunning — how adorable!" the women said,
And even men must linger, just to see
How wonderful a puppet doll can be

Who lifts her plaited skirts as dancers do
And tilts her chin, and tosses back her curls,
And to a hidden mechanism slowly whirls,
Replying to the pressure of the public gaze
With all a woman's patient little tricks and ways.

"How coy she is — how clever! I declare,
She looks as if she knew how people stare.
Just see that sudden arching of her foot . . .
And yet she's fixed as if she'd taken root!"
So laughed a woman near me, but her friend —
A girl with ardent look — laughed not at all;
The doll was surely holding her in thrall.
Forgetful of the public passing near,
And careless of the strangers who might hear,
She turned with blazing frankness to her friend:
"Well, all of us are like her! Why pretend?"

"What nonsense, dear! You know as well as I
That women of to-day are wise and free." . . .
The younger shook her head and made reply:
"The dancing doll is just like you and me;
We turn upon our pivot, just as she.
What others think, what others say, what others wear . . .
Oh, this is all we know and all we care.
Why, sometimes, do you know, it seems to me
As if a free and honest gesture could not be.
We're mechanisms, all of us, who smirk and smile,
And do as we are bid. But all the while
We know it's all a silly little show,
A puppet gayly turning on her slippered toe,
We know it's some day coming to an end . . .
Yes! All of us are like her. Why pretend?"

O women of the present, is it true?
Can this be justly said of me, of you?
And could we all be wiser, greater, if we would
Compel the forces of an age not understood?

Are we but dancing dolls upon a pivot whirled
Who might, as goddesses, re-make the world?
"What others think, what others wear, what others say" . . .
O sisters, let us stand and free ourselves, to-day!

MILADY GOES SHOPPING

I love to watch women with gloves being fitted,
So languid their fingers, with jewels aglow;
Though gems in the daytime are hardly permitted,
Milady must wear them, as all of us know.
I smile when I see how their delicate graces —
The arching of wrists, or the curving of hands,
The quiet aloofness of arrogant faces —
Would challenge the pride that an empress commands.

The moment the magic of shopping has caught her,
Your wife, humble sir, has the airs of a queen;
I doubt if a father would know his own daughter
When Fashion has conquered the heart of sixteen.
I love to watch women with shoes being shod —
So haughty their looks, so disdainful their wishes —
No matter how humbly at home they have trod,
While sweeping the kitchen or washing the dishes.

I love to see women of commonplace molding
Transformed by the wearing of exquisite things;
In garments of beauty their glory unfolding,
As grubs into butterflies claiming their wings.
There's glamour and goodness, there's purpose and power
In shimmering texture and sumptuous line;
Each maid is a bud that has burst into flower,
Each matron a beautiful, blossoming vine.

I love to watch women with hats being tried,
So arch their demeanor, so subtle their glances;
No woman so plain but she quivers with pride
To see how a hat brim her color enhances.
A siren looks out from the eyes of your mother,
A Helen of Troy in your sister awakes . . .
(This morning you chaffed her, O mischievous brother,
While over the griddle she conjured your cakes!)

For Fashion's a witch and the shops an obsession —
Now who has the courage her will to deny?
The sternest of souls is betrayed to confession,
The strongest must yield, though she never knows why.
I love to watch women, enchanted, luxurious,
Treading the shops with their heads in the air.
Watch them, good sir, if you feel a bit curious . . .
Maybe your mother or sweetheart is there!

BEASTS OF BURDEN

(NOT SO LONG AGO)

When I think of the martyred women who used to go
Sweeping and sweeping their lives away,
Dusting and bending and picking up trash,
Washing and scrubbing the spots in the parlor carpet,
Down on their knees to the god of necessity —
Had they not done it, who would forgive them, pray?
Husbands and brothers thought it the work of woman;
Husbands and fathers and brothers and sons
Took it for granted,
Laughed when their women folk complained,
Laughed as the best of men forever do
At the mere thought that woman's labor counted. . . .

When I think of the modern labor-saving things,
Patent machines that take the dust away,
Handled by strong-armed men who make it a business —
For now we can see it was always a strong man's job! —
When I think of the modern easing of woman's labor,
And how like a galley slave our women used to toil,
I feel a seething anger in me boil,
And then a hurt, deep down, and tears.
Oh, what a beast of burden woman was,
In those past years!

SHIPS OF THE WORLD

What mighty bulk upon the waves,
What battles with the sea,
That you and I may wear a coat
Or sip a cup of tea.
What surge and sweat, what heave and fret
That you should gayly wear
A Spanish comb or real aigrette
Or amber in your hair!

The ships that steam across the world
From Java or Japan,
How huge a part they seem to play
In the destinies of man!
Or whether from the Arctic shores
Or whether from Peru,
The fate of ships is woven fast
With all we think or do.

That you shall wear a 'broidered shawl
Or wave a scented fan,
That you shall be enticing and adorable to man;
That you upon a sparkling chain

Shall wear a purse of gold,
A hundred ships come in from sea
With treasure in their hold.

I wonder, women, do you know
They move at your command?
Your gesture sends them voyaging
And brings them back to land.
Your coral fingers hold the chains,
Your laughter is the breeze —
The jolly gale that sends the sail
To gather what you please.

I often lie awake and wonder
What these barges bring
Of silk and spice and fur and rugs
And every tempting thing.
What large commotion seems the rule
For woman's simplest gain!
What wars may hinge on a bit of fringe —
What agony and strain!

The puffing of the river boats,
The whistle of a ferry,
The clamor of the little tugs,
Ridiculous and merry;
The booming of an ocean liner
Coming in from sea —
Oh, these are trumpet sounds at night
And often startle me.

But when the clangor dies away,
Elusive, dark and deep,
And I upon the purple night
Am swaying soft asleep,
I dream that ships with all their fuss,
Their splendor and display
Are clever toys just made for us
To handle as we may.

I see a thousand speeding hulks
With fairy sails unfurled,
And know at last that Love controls
The ships of all the world!

WOMEN WHO KNIT AND SEW

Women who knit and sew,
When will you throw
Your beauty and your passion and your force
To stop war's devastation at its source?
When will the snowy flutter of your hands
Bring peace forever to the seething lands?
When will your blinded eyes behold it true —
War could not prosper, were it not for you!

Women who softly tread
Like angels mid the stricken and the dead,
When will you raise your million hands above
The battlefields, and cry that God is Love!
When will you shout above the cannon's roar
That war shall be no more?
The world is dying in the throes of hate —
O healing woman, speak, before too late!

Section XIII

"LISTEN IN!"

"LISTEN IN!"

Listen in to what the universe is saying,
 Listen in, listen in!
For the trumpets of Eternity are playing
 To the Springtime's violin.
If you'll cease to give your hearing or devotion
 To the little daily tumult that appears,
You will hear a new and wonderful commotion,
 The music of the singing spheres!

Listen in, listen in!
 Only hark to what the radio will tell.
For the viols of the world
Are a melody unfurled
 To summon you and say that all is well.
Though without you are surrounded with disaster,
 And sorrow is the chord you seem to hear,
You shall find the self that triumphs and is master,
 If you listen with the inner ear.

Listen in, listen in,
 While the golden organ peals,
For the music of the soul
Shall rejoice and make you whole,
 If you hark to what the radio reveals.
Though the din of life may fill you with confusion,
 And the roar of cities haunt you with dismay,
You may free yourself from terror and delusion,
 If you'll listen to Eternity to-day!

LET US HAVE FAITH!

The world needs confidence above all other things;
 Ere good can come again,
Humanity must lift its fallen wings,
 Men must have faith in men.

Men must believe that other men are true —
 Prosperity withholds her stricken face,
Nor peace may come, with tidings large and new,
 Till faith once more is throned within her place.

The world needs confidence to light the way.
 We stumble through the tangled paths of fear,
So walled about with terror and dismay,
 We know not Fortune, though she standeth near.
Doubt is a canker eating up the soul
 Of industries and nations, one by one.
Doubt is paralysis, and takes its toll
 Of every human life beneath the sun.

Men must believe that other men are just;
 Must wake the frozen channels of good will.
Not by the ancient ways of cold distrust
 May mortals conquer ill.
Men must believe that other men are fair,
 Must find the way to peace through channels new.
Suspicion breeds suspicion and despair;
 The path to honor lies in being true.

Men must have done with anger and with guilt,
 Must hurl their hatreds and their wrongs aside.
Men must tear down the temple they have built
 To prejudice and pride.
The world needs confidence! God, let it blaze
 Like Summer sounding its imperious call;
Bid men forsake their dark and sundered ways
 And toil together for the good of all!

YOU HAVE A MESSAGE TO GIVE

You have a message to give to the world;
Deep in your being its pattern is curled,
Oak in the acorn and seed in the pod,
Roots pushing up through the passionate sod,
All gathered close in the bosom of God.
Down in the deeps where your spirit is stirred,
Lo, you may find the mysterious Word —
That which your Maker has willed you to say,
You may discover and speak it to-day!

You have a message, I have a message,
All have a glorious message to give.
Why should you wonder and why should you fear?
Cry it aloud that the people may hear,
Cry it abroad that the hungry may live —
You have a message to give!

You have a message to give — do you know it?
Love at the heart of you yearns to bestow it.
Shackled and burdened and worn you may be,
But utter the word, and your spirit is free.
You, with your suffering, cruel to bear;
You, with your problem and you with your care,
Caught like a bird in this prison of clay,
Find but the message God wants you to say.
Fettered and fevered and hurt though you are,
Speak, and you shatter the prisoning bar,
Speak, and you soar to the uttermost star!

You have a message to give, do you hear it?
Scorn of the multitude, why should you fear it?
Down in the depths where you suffer and bleed,
Cry it aloud that the whole world may heed.
Only *your* spirit may know as you know —
You and you only that word may bestow.
Speak with your might while you suffer and live —
You have a message to give!

THE DOUBTERS

O little crawling minds that grope
 Within a shuttered room, to find
Your valid reason for the Hope
 That lifts the heart of humankind;
O doubters, pricking with a pin
 The fabric of the universe,
What answer shall your probing win,
 What splendor shall your rules rehearse?

Go forth and walk beneath the moon,
 Let beauty bathe your mocking face;
On some stupendous night in June
 Be learner in the halls of space.
Then ask your questions if you can:
 "Does man survive? Does God exist?
What proof have we beyond this span,
 What sign that human souls persist?"

O little crawling minds that reach
 No farther than the shutter's rim,
What wisdom can your findings teach
 Who have no consciousness of Him?
And how shall you who have no sight
 Be leaders of the souls who see?
And how shall they who know the Light
 Go creeping where no light can be?

Section XIV

FRUSTRATION

THE MOTH IN THE INK BOTTLE

Many a human soul as brave as you
Went winging after love and flaming Truth,
When sudden darkness drowned their fatal youth . . .
Many have yearned to do what you would do.

Perfect and pure, with lovely wings outspread,
You lie upon the indigo, as stark
As some lost angel stricken by the dark,
A messenger of joy untimely dead.

Frail as an image etched upon the night,
A satin blur with velvet spots of brown,
Your painted wings were fashioned for renown . . .
Not for the doom of ignominious blight.

Yet you whose gauzy hopes too soon were slain
Could challenge not your ocean of despair,
Nor had you human courage to declare
That faith should ride above your seas of pain.

Oh, strange that we, who are not moths but men,
Should fail our destiny or lose the goal,
With centuries of Truth to save the soul
And tongues of prophecy let loose again!

O moth, O messenger, your word is said!
Not vainly have you reeled against the light;
My soul has caught the challenge of your flight,
And Courage lifts again her golden head.

FRUSTRATION

You were not ready when I came;
 You did not know me when I passed.
The years which should be lit with flame
 And eloquent, are overcast.

You did not recognize my face
As I knew yours at the first glance;
And so a stranger fills your place,
Through irony of circumstance.

The feeble hour, the frail pretense,
The kisses empty as my heart;
The stupid game of time and sense —
But you and I apart!

LIFE WEANS HER CHILDREN

The lips of men press hard against Life's beauty,
And drain her milk, that turns again to gall;
And Time makes tense the satin flesh with duty,
Till human infants murmur: "Is this all?"

Life, could she utter wisdom for our hearing,
Would wean us from such tender nourishment;
Would send us forth to battle without fearing,
Would help us find the whole of her intent.

Life, could she utter to our understanding,
Would laugh our baby whimperings to scorn,
Would better us with vehement commanding:
"Oh, not for infant babblings were ye born!

"Oh, not for milk drawn gently at the breast,
Oh, not for love that softens while it feeds,
But for the sterner strivings and the test
Of wider bounds, I turn against your needs.

"I cover up the bosom that would give
Abundantly of every joyful good,
That ye who must have nourishment to live
May grow to manliness and womanhood.

"Oh, strange it seems that I, who love you well,
Should have no other way my love to speak;
And yet my higher purpose I must tell,
And so I turn my bosom from your cheek!"

THWARTED SOULS

The one thing that most quickly brings on old age,
Sadness, and a deep weariness with life,
Is being hindered, checked, kept back from self expression —
Perverted from the original clear design
The Creative Hand embroidered on your soul.

This is a candid, straight confession
Of things I've known and seen and felt —
People with whom I've dealt
Have shown me desperate evidence
That what I say is true —

For them, for me, for you
A law shines clear and high,
And with the thwarting of that law, we die . . .
Die, while the breath is in our bodies; die
To the swift radiance that once we knew.
The self that glowed with fresh and noble impetus
Loses its vigor, cares a little less each day,
And after pallid years of mean existence
Withers away.

Oh, it is bitter to my soul to see
How blind, how cruel human folk may be,
Embittered parents crushing out the soul of youth, the old
Not happy till their blighted selves behold
The cheek of youth grown thin and sorrowful too.

Age envies youth its fire.
The old and pulseless covet that same joy
They cruelly extinguish.
Oh, the excruciating stress
And devastating pain
Of arguments that end not for despair!
"Father, this thing that I would do
Expresses what I feel is best . . .
It is the inmost cry of my own spirit.
Mother, I must, I must!"

Then the terrific chill,
The clamping purpose putting ours to flight,
The imperative "No!" to all our eager cries.
"Wait; think awhile; let learning make you wise."
We wait . . . we wait . . . we wait,
While love and glory sadden into hate.
O parents, ponder well before you violently fling
Winter's despair upon the hopes of Spring!

"FAILURE"

Failure and disappointment are the levers
Lifting our lives to nobler planes,
Compelling growth, demanding of the soul
A more enduring goal.

Affliction once again and yet again
Should mean to thinking men
Power and promise; never the forsaking
Of what the heart is set upon, nor taking
One whit the less than first the soul desired.
Pain is the push that sends the sluggish will
Once more upon its errands; and the thrill

Of early hope, the purposes that fired
Your first impassioned effort, live anew
When Fate deals hard with you.

Oh, challenge her with fresh imperious call,
The while you hear the rolling of her drums,
And you shall see, when happy Fortune comes,
Failure was never failure, after all!

COURAGE

It might have been, yet it could not be,
And the sigh which vexes the soul of me
Must sting me deeper and deeper still,
Must probe my courage and whet my will
And send me forward to seek and know —
'Tis the coward says, "It was better so!"

It might have been! I had sped the track,
But the breadth of a finger held me back,
And my steed kept faith with my flying soul,
And we laughed to welcome the nearing goal —
Then the turn of chance or the twist of Fate
And a gasp of failure beneath the gate.

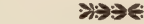
'Tis the fool who says, "It is better so."
But the wise man says, "I must seek and know!"
Is my will too weak or my purpose pale?
Are the spurs at fault that my steed should fail?
I shall probe with passion of heart and mind,
For I scorn the comfort that cowards find.

And I scorn the calm of the pasture sheep,
For a man must swing from the course they keep.
'Tis the brute that suffers nor questions why,
But a man must utter the spirit's cry;

A man must fathom the ways of Fate
And fling his challenge to Heaven's gate.

It might have been, yet it happened not,
And grief is a thing not soon forgot.
So I still must suffer that proud regret,
Must find my way to the answer yet.
'Tis the coward says, "It was better so—"
But I go forward to seek and know!

Section XV



"LET US BE BROTHERS!"

"LET US BE BROTHERS!"

(THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE, 1930)

Here is a theme to resurrect the world
And roll the stone of hatred from her tomb.
So long, so long in the death-linen furled,
How sweet to wake in sunlight from her doom!
Had God proclaimed His wish in words of light,
His letters on the wall revealed again,
How could He then more passionately write,
How could He make His will more clear to men?

Here is a deed to set the world athrill!
This kinship out of chaos, more divine
Than chariots of fire upon a hill
Or crystal water turning into wine.
Nor God could call in utterance more loud
Had Sinai thundered in the market place
Beseeching men to cast their ancient shroud
And turn to life their resurrection face.

"Let us be brothers!" Europe, though you look
Through tumbling centuries of pride and gore,
Through hallowed parchment or emblazoned book,
You shall not find in monuments of lore
Such word as this to mend your anguished mind,
Such miracle as this to heal your soul,
Such challenge to the nations of mankind
To offer up their hatreds and be whole!

TOLSTOI

I will cast my lot with the poor
Who are turned from plenty's door.
I will say my word for the weak,
Who are far too worn to speak.

Oh, thronged is the gilded way
Where the slaves of Crœsus play,
But I shall go
Where the meek and low
Suffer and starve to-day.

I will cast my lot with the small —
They are greatest, after all.
I will make my vow to the weak,
Who shelter and bread must seek.
Oh, strange were the tales we told
Of a life made glad with gold,
But now I see
No wealth can be
Till my neighbor share and hold.

I will cast my lot with the meek —
I seek what the lowly seek.
I shall set my foot at the door
Of the beautiful, righteous poor.
Oh, thronged is the shining stair
Where Mammon spreads his snare,
But I shall go
Through the drifting snow
To a hovel bleak and bare.

I have dwelt with the rich at ease,
I have seen as the rich man sees.
I have looked on the poor man's cot
Where pleasure and health are not.
Oh, swift is the choice I make!
Oh, sweet is the path I take!
For I have heard
God's great new Word —
I shall live for my brother's sake.

THE ELEVATOR MAN

(ON SEEING A FEEBLE OLD MAN CONFINED INDOORS TO RUN THE ELEVATOR OF A SUMMER HOTEL)

A blight has fallen upon my mood to-day,
For we who ride and play
And romp and sing;
Yes, we who bring
Laughter and all good feeling each to each
Appear to me as tyrants, all of us,
Beggaring speech.
For I have seen
Something more poignant than the green
Mad beauty of the sun-illumined hills,
More vivid than the cataract that thrills
The weakest soul to wonder and delight —
Oh, I have seen a pity-stirring sight!

For while we revel in the enchanting air,
And live our days serenely, without care,
Rejoicing in our cheerful heritage,
He stands within his close and musty cage
And takes us up and down and up and down
And up and down.
Oh, many have renown
For braver deeds, more difficult by far;
And over in the fields where soldiers are
Is evidence of valor passing this;
And yet what super-courage must be his
Who, looking on the amber day outside,
Must force himself to ride
Over and over, through the stupid day
Just up and down and up and down, in this dull way!

Oh, youth is glad and has its path to go,
And youth could laugh awhile to labor so.
But age, that labored long ere youth began,
Is surely worthy of a kindlier plan!

Oh, age of every rank and race should be as free
As bright leaves dancing on a poplar tree . . .
And I must shade my eyes and bow my head,
To find him caged in misery instead!

"GOD BE MERCIFUL"

Let *man* be merciful, before he asks of God
A pity he withholds from his own kin.
Let man be merciful, if he would shun the rod
Or find salvation from the fruit of sin.

Let him who prays for justice make his plea
For strength to be a juster man, instead.
God is as just as man will let Him be—
Through man alone shall earth be comforted!

INDIFFERENCE

Where a little lamb lay bleeding,
People passed unheeding.
"Surely its owner will take it away."
But the lamb lay on till close of day.
And they who passed on the other side
Knew not the lamb had died.

Where a little child was pleading,
People passed unheeding.
"Great are the burdens we have to bear.
Someone will take it and give it care."
But the child wept on till the close of day,
When an angel came and bore it away.

Where a tender heart lay bleeding,
People passed unheeding.
"The wound will heal — 'twill not be long,
For love is fleeting and youth is strong."
And they who passed on the other side
Cared not when the woman died.

FELLOW FEELING

Would I could enter all men's minds,
Would I could enter the human soul unbidden
And know the truth long hidden.
Would I could see what each one finds
Of subtle ecstasy or woe;
And if he's bad, what makes him so?
And if he's good and sweet and glad
What makes him better than the bad?
If all are made of goodly stuff
What blurs the mirror, spoils the plan?
What is it turns God's image rough?
Would I could probe the heart of man!

Would I could enter all men's minds,
Would I could enter the souls of youth and maiden,
Of woman, sorrow laden.
Would I might lift the dusky blinds,
Behold what truth the day reveals!
What is the urge my neighbor feels
That touches not my soul at all?
And how may I, without her thrall,
Pronounce the judgment of the good?
And how may I, without her thrill,
Declare that I have understood,
And prate of punishment for ill?

Would I could enter all men's minds,
Would I could enter the soul that Fortune favors,
The timid life that wavers.
Would I might know the fear that binds,
What influences down the age
Made this man tremble, this one rage;
This woman strong, and this wax-weak.
Oh, for a godly word to speak . . .
"I know! I know! I understand.
Of all your woe am I a part!"
Oh, then, perhaps my human hand
Might heal the sundered human heart.

VEILS

What shall take the veils from people's faces?
What remove the mask that keeps us
From ever knowing others?
We are all sisters, brothers,
Yet all of us are quite apart,
Living in different places.
None seems to know the other, none is sure
Whether his friend be rascally, or pure.

All are suspicious, fearful, ill at ease.
None trusts the other fully . . . none may dare!
Oh, does the mask still hide your spirit, neighbor,
From mine?
And who shall rend
The doubt that keeps us still apart, my friend?
Somehow I half suspect you are a god,
Could I but see!
Oh, how shall I, and how shall you
Pull down the veil that hides forever
Me from you, and you from me?

I SPEAK TO YOU

I speak to you, brother —
I speak to the God in your eyes,
I summon your strength to arise!
O baffled one, I know, I know
The perilous path you go . . .
The grief that clouds the brain,
The toil that seems in vain.
All this I know, I know,
For Life has told me so.
And yet, another thing Life says to me:
" Where courage is, no lack or loss can be! "

I speak to you, sister —
I speak to the look in your eyes,
I summon your youth to arise!
O weighted one, I too, I too,
Was burdened, even as you.
And yet I found a center
Where joy and light could enter;
You, too, may find that force
Deep in your being's source.
For oh, a golden thing Life says to me:
" Where courage is, no lack or loss can be! "

I speak to you, brother,
I summon your will to its throne!
I speak to you, sister,
Who think you are fighting alone.
Do you know that above, and beneath, and around you to-day
The flame of the spirit is back of the body's dismay?
The hope of the spirit, the joy that was kindled in youth —
Oh, these are your own, to be bought with the coinage of Truth.

You are free of your sin, you are free of your bondage at last
When you utter the Word that shall sever your soul from its past.
For God is your Father, and Love Divine your Mother —
I speak to you, challenge you, summon you,
Sister, brother!

~ ~ ~

CHRISTMAS AFTER WAR

Christmas! And every tongue athrill
With songs of "Peace on earth, good will!"
Yet in the shadow of the cross
The stricken nations mourn their loss,
While maddened mothers tear the breast
For famished little babes at rest.

Christmas! And people blinded yet
By fears the race may not forget;
By cant and prejudice and strife,
That pour their venom into life.
And over all the earth's unrest
The trumpeting of wrong's behest —
The shrilling of remorseless Greed —
"What matters it if others need?"

Christmas! And homes that hail the birth
Of tender souls upon the earth
Where usury and malice grind
The helpless children of mankind.
O Christ, who standest now as then
Weeping above the ways of men,
When shall the glory of the creeds
Enter the warp of human deeds?

When shall the selfish heart grow warm
With love that feels another's harm?
When shall the soul be torn in twain
With sorrow for another's pain?
God, help Thy sundered race to see,
What kills my brother killeth me!

NOAH SAID

Noah said,
Seeing the warning overhead,
Knowing how fast the waters ran —
A deluge coming to conquer man —
"Lo, let us build above the storm
A house to shelter us safe and warm."
For Noah knew
That only love is true.

But modern mortals say,
Seeing the winds that rage to-day:
"Come, let us fight the storm with storm.
No peaceful ark may shield from harm.
When thunder bellows down the sky,
With equal wrath shall we reply.
When lightning strikes, we shatter, too.
We rend and rave as tempests do.
Only by meeting wrong with wrong
May strong men batter down the strong."

But Noah said,
Seeing the warning overhead:
"Come, let us build above the gale,
God's ark of love, that shall not fail!"

GOD DOES NOT WEEP

"God does not weep, and why should I?"
The cynic said.
"He knows . . . He sees the ills of earth outspread,
The famine and the torture of mankind.
And yet, within His Heaven, deaf and blind,
He lets man suffer, lifting not His hand
To stay the ravage wrecking every land."

Another joined the cynic's bitter cry:
"True! God seems not the least to know or care,
And why should I be tortured with despair?
And why should I be sacrificing day and night
For other people's plight,
Their sorrow graven in my very sleep,
When God, the wise Creator, does not weep?"

"O friends, O thoughtless friends!" another made reply,
"We are the heart and hands of God. . . . Yes, you and
The only way that God can ever speak
To save the famine-stricken, help the weak,
Is through the channel of the human heart.
And you and I and all of us must do our part,
To bring a finer justice to His Cause . . .
'Tis you and I should mold the higher laws.

"For God it is who urges, through our pain,
That His design for man be not in vain.
Say not 'God does not weep, God does not care'—
For God it is who feels the world's despair
And cries to us, who are His heart and brain:
'Go, rid the world of poverty and pain!'"

THE TEST OF FRIENDSHIP

Here is my hand, O friend of mine.
Whatever problems may be thine,
Whatever griefs have come thy way,
Oh, let me share them, if I may!

Here is my staunch, enduring heart.
I ask that I shall bear a part
Of what is cruelest to bear —
Thine inmost sorrow let me share!

Here is my faith, here is my trust.
Though Fate should fling thee to the dust,
Though Life should sully thee with shame,
My soul shall reverence thy name.

Let others doubt thee, if they will;
My faith no evil word may kill.
Once I have named and called thee friend,
That thou shalt call me, to the end!

~ ~ ~

YOUR NEIGHBOR'S HAPPINESS

Be glad of your neighbor's happiness,
Rejoice in your friend's success;
Be swift to him
When his luck is slim
And he calls you in distress.
For nothing is gained by coveting,
And envy is kin to crime.
When you yield to hate,
You challenge Fate
And hinder the wheels of Time.

Be glad of your neighbor's happiness,
Your enemy's fortune, too,
For the thoughts you send
To foe or friend
Will surely return to you.
If you smile when your foe is sorry,
If his failure to you is sweet,
It is you who win
The fruit of sin —
It is you who have found defeat!

Be glad of your neighbor's happiness,
God fathers us all the same.
And every soul
Is part of the whole
And shares earth's joy and blame.
Go now to the one you envied,
Fling open your heart and mind;
Go, find the thrill
Of the heart's good will. . . .
Be one of God's humankind!

THE GREATEST SIN

I dreamed I saw the body of mankind
Writhing with torture in a desert place.
The limbs were fever-torn, the eyes were blind,
And sweat of fearful anguish on its face.
Yea, thus I saw within one living whole
Those struggling units called the human race.
But each beheld itself a separate soul
And warred upon the others, till their strife
Poisoned the centers of the body's life.
And the dull people swarming in that frame
Knew not its cause of agony and shame.

And then again I dreamed —
How strange and terrible it seemed!
As if the brain should say, " I dwell alone."
As if the nerves should hold themselves apart
And arteries and veins should fail to own
Their kinship with the heart —
Lo, there were those who said:
" Let us be happy and well fed! "
For these were stationed at the body's head;
Nor cared how other human beings dwelt.
I wondered why it was they never felt
The anguish of their brothers when they died.
I wondered why it was they could not hear
The weeping of the widows far and near,
Nor know how little starving children cried.
Yet all within one human mass were born!
He who ignores it, shuts his eyes in vain.
If from the arm the living hand is torn,
The body writhes in pain.

I dreamed I saw the body of mankind
Tortured and blinded in the wilderness.
And none of all the sufferers could find
The source of their distress
Until a voice, in answer to their crying,
Came like a wind replying:
" The name of man's disease is *selfishness!* "

Section XVI

Men and Women

THE COIN OF LIFE

The Woman

How little we get, we women,
When we answer love's behest —
A clasp of the body, a sigh, a kiss,
A surge at the breast.
A house to love and tend, perhaps;
Troubles and trials many;
The coin of life doled out to us
Penny by bitter penny.
While all the vast, sweet ranges
Of soul and brain and will —
Unshared, unanswered longings —
Storm within us still.

The Man

How little we get, we mortals,
When we answer woman's call!
A fleeting taste of happiness,
A dream — and that is all.
The passion of daily sacrifice;
The toil, the fear, the strain;
The wrestling with our enemies
To shield her life from pain. . . .
Oh, could she see how every stroke
Of heart and brain and pen
Is just to make her happier —
Would she be happy then?

THE GREAT DESIGN

A man and a woman, mad for each other, were wed. Few were the years that passed, when the woman turned to the man and said:

"What is this cheat called love, that brings two beings
heart to heart,
Only to fail in the end, and leave them apart?"

And the man, weary and dulled with many a burden,
bowed his head;
While pallid passion sorrowed above its dead.
But Nature, seeing the drama, softly smiled. . . .
Her eyes were fixed on the face of a breathing child.
"My Purpose lives, after the selfish love is gone.
My work goes on," she said. "My work goes on!"

WOMAN THE MYSTERY?

Who hath declared that the woman is deep
Knoweth not man, who hath secrets to keep.
Who hath proclaimed that the woman is wise
Little he dreameth how man doth disguise.

Man is the mystery, so I declare.
Seldom his soul with the woman doth share.
Sits at her table and dreams by her fire —
Jealously guardeth his spirit's desire.

Warming his hands at the altar of love,
Still is he standing that altar above.
Woman his helper through all of her days —
Yet doth he wander in separate ways.

Long have we bowed to the woman who wore
Symbols of sacred immutable lore.
Woman the mother we long have revered,
Woman the mystery subtly have feared.

Now is this truth coming home to my heart —
Man has forever been living apart.
Never the whole of his purpose hath shown,
Never the son to his mother is known.

Though she might question again and again,
Still would the woman know little of men.
Man is the mystery — thus he remains.
Woman hath missed him for all of her pains.

Though she had wedded him twenty times ten,
Still would the woman know little of men.
Man is the mystery! Clasping his own,
Still doth he travel his pathway alone!



WHAT OF MY BOREDOM?

NOTE: The author recently overheard a conversation at afternoon tea, in one of our fashionable hotels, wherein one woman told another that a friend's husband was about to divorce her for the SOLE REASON that she "bored him."

I have a question, sir, that I would ask:
You who would take a faithful wife to task,
You who divorce me at your blithesome will
Because no longer do you find the thrill
Of beauty and companionship with one
Whose youth was ended ere it had begun. . . .
So young, so young was I when we were wed!
"Mere boy and girl," was what our parents said. . . .
What of *my* boredom? What of my despair
When, on the day I found you did not care,
I shut my longing up and made no moan
And went my disenchanted way alone?

And when, with spring, new love looked down on me,
I turned my face. I would not even see —
Though he who plead with me was great and kind,
He kindled me, he wakened all my mind
With dreams and visions I had since forgot.
I looked upon this man, and answered not!

What of *my* boredom, sir, who dared not take
This innocent delight, for honor's sake —
So meekly went the way of all good wives
Who lead supremely sacrificial lives
And make themselves immune to other loves, because
A wife, unsatisfied, offends the laws?

What of *my* boredom, sir? I challenge you
To show that I was otherwise than true.
Never was there an hour, as I live,
You sought attention that I failed to give.
My drowsy eyes I forced to keep apart;
Weary to death, from slumber I would start
And greet you at the stair, and bring you bread,
And smooth a snowy pillow for your head.
This was my wifely duty, as your mind construed it —
For had I been asleep, I should have rued it!
So to escape your ire
I sat for hours beside a desolate fire. . . .

What of my sorrow, sir, who gave you sons
(Too young were they to perish at the guns!)
And lovely daughters, delicate of face,
Who filled our home with ecstasy and grace. . . .
Now they, alas, are gone — for girls must wed;
And you and I, alone, are here instead. . . .
Existence is a place of barren stalks
Where lilies bloomed beside my garden walks.
Life has a way of robbing us, somehow;
Yet I've been true, been true to that first vow;
And you would have your freedom! Be it so.
No word of mine shall hold, if you would go. . . .
I've been a toy, a top for your hand's spinning.
My life has had no end and no beginning
Save in the will of him who named me " wife."

And now I am a burden on your life:
A weight, a dull and draggled beast, perhaps.
Life, that has tangled me in all its traps

And speared me as a hunter spears his prey,
Life laughs at me, and bids you go your way —
You who are bored and sick and must have rest.
Yet I must stay behind, and beat my breast!

"TILL DEATH DO US PART"

God bless you, dear, wherever you are,
Wherever you go, with your new-found mate;
Though far from me as the farthest star,
Though torn from me by a ruthless fate;
I loved you once and I cannot hate.
God bless you, dear — I must say it still.
I would scorn to hold you against your will.

At first, in the dark of the naked night,
When my anguish towered in all its might,
It seemed to me that my bitter curse
Would shatter the brazen universe.
I pictured her in my rightful place,
I saw you smile in her lifted face,
Your lips to her lovely lips were pressed,
Your head was pillowed upon her breast —
And I screamed to God he would kill you there,
In the mesh of her wondrous hair!
But now my sorrow has made me wise —
It is better to suffer than to despise.
So dearly I love you, so true my heart,
Whether together or whether apart,
Though your path go forth to the farthest star —
God bless you, dear, wherever you are!

Whosesoever you are, wherever you go,
I want you to feel it, I want you to know:
Through sorrow and struggle and bitter ache
My heart must cling for the old love's sake,

My thought must swing to the early days
When we trod so gladly the humble ways.
Can you forget it — the hushed, gray morn
When you thrilled to the cry of our babe, newborn?
How the future glowed with the plans you made,
Buoyant and happy and unafraid!
We toiled together, saw many a sun
Rise red and brave on the fight begun —
Oh, gallant fight that was greatly won!
But my heart will break if I think too far —
God bless you, dear, wherever you are!

They say she is clever, they say she is fair;
They say I should bear it, and never care,
That I should be noble and large of mind,
For the sake of a broader womankind.
"When the old love dies, new love!" they say.
Yet mine burns on till the judgment day!
Wherever you are I am still your wife;
I shall hold me so till the end of life.
I shall hurl my cry 'gainst the heavenly gate;
I shall seek you and find you — my mate, my mate!
My cry shall pierce to the farthest star —
God bless you, dear, wherever you are!

WHEN THE CHILD SPEAKS

Christmas day, and the world awake
With feast and song for the Christ child's sake;
And a man alone with his bitter vow:
"She made her choice, let her keep it now.
Does she hope to soften a strong man's hate
By foolish letters that come too late?"
And a child with a face like a rose in bloom
Sobbed alone in another room.

Ah, well, when a man and a woman part,
Each with an unforgiving heart,
What matters a child who cannot sing?
What matter if Christmas carols ring
O'er sundered lives and a sundered home
Where a mother's presence may never come?

Christmas day, and the world half mad
With giving and loving and being glad.
Said the woman — a hundred miles between
Her lonely rooms and that other scene —
"This is the day I cast aside
A fool's pretense and a woman's pride.
I will go on my knees, I will eat the dust,
But hold my child in my arms, I must."

.

The bulk of a building against the night,
Windows ablaze with Christmas light,
A door swung wide, a flash, a scream. . . .
"Mother, mother! It's like my dream.
I prayed you would come and come to stay,
To be my present on Christmas day!"

But the man at the window did not turn;
His back was rigid, his shoulders stern.
Did she think to conquer a will like his?
As well to challenge the Destinies!
"O mummy, mummy! It wasn't true —
The things they said when I cried for you" —
The man at the window wheeled about.
"Why did you come?" he thundered out.
"For the sake of the child" . . . her voice was weak
With the weight of anguish she could not speak.
"Isn't it late for that?" he sneered.
And the war that had parted them woke and reared
Its terrible presence, hot with strife,
A flaming sword 'twixt man and wife.

"Look, mummy — under my Christmas tree!
Here is the doll you dressed for me —
Oh, I can remember far back as that —
See, here are the shoes and the little hat!
And mummy, dad says I'll never grow
Too old for dolls, I love them so.
He says all girls should be that way,
For it makes them mothers, the more they play.
But he told me" — a cloud for the moment hung —
"*You* didn't love dollies when *you* were young.
I asked him why, but he wouldn't say —
Just looked at me in the queerest way."
"You dared to say it!" the woman turned
To challenge him, and her anger burned.

.

"Well, isn't it true? You answered the call —
Art was the greatest claim of all."
She flashed: "It was only in self-defense.
Couldn't you pierce that huge pretense?
Shall a woman consent to be stale and old
Because her husband's love is cold?"
His eyes were grim: "Well, that would depend
On the *kind* of woman, her aim and end."
"You *shall* not say it! As well as I
You know those tales were a bitter lie.
And the courts were cruel that tore from me
Child of my breast and my agony.
Do you think a father can ever know?
'Tis only the mother who suffers so."
"But you railed at marriage" — "Well, what of you?
Didn't you rail at marriage, too?
You called it a custom long outworn,
A page from an ancient parchment torn."
"Well, I am a man. No woman is fit
To be a mother, who scoffs at it.
I heard you say you would almost give
Your child in exchange, to be free and live!"

The woman lifted her humbled head,
Her cheeks were hollow, her eyes were red.
"I have supped that lie, I have supped it well.
'Tis the mother who suffers the pangs of hell
Through the aching nights, when there is no rest
And no child to fondle against the breast."

"O father — look! Did you ever see
So shiny and pretty a Christmas tree?
But some way, daddy, it isn't right,
'Cause mummy wasn't here last night
To fix the things like she used to do.
Don't you remember? You helped her, too!
And both of you laughed and talked so low
In the other room, so I wouldn't know.
But, daddy, I heard you just the same;
You called dear mummy the sweetest name" —
"Hush!" and the man with a single stride
Snatched the child from the mother's side.
"How dared you come, when you had no right,
To shatter our peace on Christmas night?"
"She's mine!" cried the woman, her arms flung out
To clasp the little one close about.
Blazed the primitive in his face . . .
"Not while I live to run the race!
Listen, daughter, you shall decide.
Which of us two?" Her eyes were wide.
"Why, father, *I'm yours and mother's too.*
I'll only be happy with *both* of you.
O daddy! Won't you let mother stay?
It's awful sad when she goes away."

.

Hark! What melody ringing high
In a shower of chimes against the sky?
"Mummy! It's what you taught me to sing
When I was the littlest, littlest thing!

"'Peace on earth, good will to men.'
Listen — I'll sing it for you again."
Just how it happened, nobody knew.
'Twas like a miracle, out of the blue.
"Alice!" His voice was broken now,
Gone forever the hateful vow.
"John!" her head on his shoulder laid,
Her arms about him unafraid;
And the child between, who united them
With the wonderful song of Bethlehem.
O logs, burn high! O logs, burn bright!
O bells, ring on with all your might,
For the soul of the home has come back to stay,
And all is right with Christmas day!

TWO TALK OF DAWN

One Speaks

Dawn is a thief who robs me of my dreams,
And with his yellow coin goes shouting up the sky
Too far for my reply.
I dream the world is beautiful and good,
I wake to find my fellow men misunderstood,
And war and famine striding through the land.
I dream that women cherish what they love,
I wake to find their clutches killing what they hold;
I dream that he, my love, will treasure as pure gold
The thought of one who loves him to the end. . . .
I wake to find he has forgotten me!
Dawn is a thief who steals my dreams away
And leaves me comfortless when goes the dark —
For night is fair, but bright remorseless day
Is cruel, cold and stark!

Dawn is a Giver whose creative hand
Rekindles to a swift and rosy fire
Lost dreams and lost desire.
I sink to sleep, discouraged and afraid,
I wake to find a vivid world, new made,
And all the hopes that I had thought forlorn
Are mine again, reborn.
I seek my pillow in the dreary night
Believing I shall never trust again;
I waken with the stirring of the light
To greet the world of women and of men
With higher faith than I have known before. . . .
The doubts of yesterday are mine no more.
Oh, tell me not, my friend, that Dawn can be
An enemy of hope for you or me;
Oh, call him not a thief, for that is crime.
Dawn is the greatest Giver of all time!

ODIN, I WOULD ASK OF YOU

Odin, I would ask of you
 Were you a mortal man,
Forced to live as mortals do
 Within one ordered span,
Disciplined by thought and vow
 To love one cherished wife,
Which would be your treasure now —
 The darling of your life?

Frigga, crowned with loyal worth,
 Fruitful, brave and fond,
Bringing sturdy sons to birth,
 Strengthening love's bond;

Or would Saga's charms unwind
Immortal as of yore?
Would the glory of her mind
Enchant you as before?

Odin, I would ask of you
This puzzle to explain:
What can any mortal do
When his love is twain?
If you had your choice to make
Of one and one alone,
Which enchantress would you take
Forever to your throne?

NOT TILL THEN

Not till woman is free from man
Shall she man's worship win.
Not till her broadened wisdom span
The ordered sphere he travels in;
Not till her hungering arms unfold
And loose the lover she would hold;
Not till she offers up the key
And sets man's heart and body free;
Not till his lust she stands above,
Shall she within his breast breed Love.

Not till man from her is freed
Who binds him with her smothering hair;
Till the lordly Spirit lead
Captive beasts from out their lair;
Till he sees that sex may find
Glorious pleasure in the Mind.
When beside him stands his mate,
Joyous, brave, immaculate . . .
Yea, when man is freed from woman,
Shall the human race be human!

AN OLD MAN TO HIS WIFE

Funny I can't look at you
Same as other people do.
Folks will say, "Well, I declare,
Mandy's gettin' silver hair."
Folks proclaim *I'm* growin' old —
Wouldn't know, if 'twasn't told!

Somehow, when you see it plain,
Life is just a window pane.
When the body's blurred and worn,
And the shades a trifle torn,
People seem to think that *we*
Aren't the same's we used to be!

Ain't it funny, ain't it strange,
How they look to see us change?
Just as if eternal youth
Wasn't part of Gospel Truth!
Well, if they could see my heart,
Guess I'd give 'em quite a start!

Can't they see I'm just the same,
Lookin' through the window frame?
Can't they see that you are *you,*
Gay and handsome, shinin' through?
Though the pane is dimmed a bit,
You are there. What matters it?

Mandy, when you look at me,
'Tisn't age at all I see.
Someone beamin' from behind
Seems to come and lift a blind —
Once you looked at me that way;
I was yours that summer day!

Well, if folks will talk of age,
Let them have their badinage.
When this window pane grows thin,
Why, my girl, we'll just walk in
To find the same old Heavenly place
Where first I saw my Mandy's face!

THE PRIME OF LIFE

I sing the man in his prime!
We have sung too much of youth —
Gay lasses, wild lads, ignorant of truth.
I sing of hearts unhurt by time,
Of pulsing energies restrained;
I sing of purposes sustained,
Of victories superbly won;
I sing of races yet to run,
Of goals to meet and hills to climb —
I sing the man in his prime!

I sing the woman sublime —
Dear buds have had their day.
Slim girls, sweet girls, dancing their youth away.
I sing the woman in her prime
Who keeps the zest of maidenhood
In striving for the common good.
I sing the mother sound, complete,
With hardy children at her feet —
Come, poets, wreathe for her a rhyme;
Sing the woman sublime!

THREE WOMEN

The "Emancipated Woman"

As the passionate stream hateth the bounds it would leap,
So hateth my soul the endearing caress
And the arms that would hold while they bless.
So hateth my spirit the love that would keep
My courage in check and my ardor asleep.
As the thundering cataract forces the mountain gate,
I am free, I am free from the bonds of home and mate!

The "Old-Fashioned Woman"

As the passionate stream loveth the look of the sun,
So loveth my soul the enduring delight
Of him who enchanteth my sight.
So loveth my spirit the shores that would make
My channel of bondage, for righteousness' sake;
So hateth my heart the way of the woman bold
Whose will no love can hold.

The Woman of the Future

Oh, what of the shore, oh, what of the limiting shore
If Love be the call that lures us to the sea?
Whether a woman's heart be bound or free
Matters the least to life, whose waters pour
In ceaseless rivers through an eternal door.
Strive as she will to escape the enduring plan,
Never shall woman free herself from man.
Never shall man from woman find himself apart —
Life is the ocean whence their separate beings start;
Life is the ocean calling them forever to unite . . .
For only when the twain are one can Fate be right!

Section XVII

Mothers, Sons and Daughters

MOTHERS WITH LITTLE SONS

O mothers with little sons
 And burning hearts to teach,
You are the chosen ones —
 Give hearing, I beseech!
The world is a ghastly place
 Since war has slain our men;
But yours is the gift and yours the grace
 To bring love back again.

Mothers, I beg you, heed
 What hate's dark hand has done;
How the hearts of the people bleed
 Till peace and right are won.
How the maimed and halt and blind
 And the dread ones hidden away
Are a challenge to all mankind
 To fashion a better way.

Mothers with little sons,
 As you hold them to your breast,
Teach them to hate the guns —
 That love and faith are best;
Show how the tyrant War
 Destroys but does not win,
How the goals men battle for
 Are lost with the world's great sin.

Strip from the monster's frame
 His glittering robe of lies;
Show him in all his shame
 To your children's visioning eyes;
Show how the lust to kill
 Is the jungle's law of might,
And shells dropped down on a helpless town
 Are murder in God's sight.

O mothers with little sons,
Who stand with lifted faces,
All of earth's helpless ones
Cry from the lonely places;
And the dead men plead their cause
And the crippled men implore:
"Go, fashion the future's laws
That war shall be no more."
For war is a knave's design
And a coward's brutal scheme,
And men whose courage is divine
Shall foster a nobler dream.

O mothers with little sons,
The years lie in your hands;
You are the chosen ones;
Men wait for your commands;
Not till your lips declare,
"Our sons no more shall fight,"
Shall the crimson soil be fair
And the ravaged earth be right.

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MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

"O mother, mother! Won't you come and see
The storm of sunlight in the poplar tree?
He stands, a soldier clad in silver mail,
And all about his head a fire of hail!"

"But, daughter, when such heavy duties press,
What right have I to joy or loveliness?
Some later time, perhaps" — a sigh she drew —
"I'll look upon the poplar tree with you."

"But, mother, mother! Come and see the moon,
A snowy feather on the breast of noon.
I cannot bear such beauty you should miss. . . .
Oh, never, never was a moon like this."

"But, daughter, I've a hundred things to do.
Perhaps, an hour later, when I'm through"—
"Oh, then the magic of the moon may be
Dissolved within the sky's immensity!"

"But, daughter, when the tasks of life are set,
No lure should stay us till the goal is met.
Nor skies, nor birds, nor dreams upon the wing"—
"But, mother, beauty is a golden thing. . . .

"And beauty like a medicine may heal,
Some hidden fount of energy reveal,
And make us strong to shoulder all our care. . . .
Oh, give to her the burdens that you bear!"

"My daughter, O my daughter, could it be!
If sorcery like this could comfort me"—
She sighed again—"Who knows perhaps but I
Might rhapsodize as you upon the sky."

"O mother, could you only yield your task!
For life is *now* the golden thing you ask.
Yes, here within the moment's simple round
The very height of happiness is found.

"Oh, could we hear the gods' eternal laughter. . . .
They see the folly of the things we're after—
We human folk who strain for goals ahead,
Nor clasp the moment's ecstasy instead.

"To-day is ours! O mother, don't you see?
Come now and live it royally with me.
Fling all your burdens in the lap of June.
Beauty is calling. Let us answer—soon!"

THINGS I REMEMBER

Things I remember are like this —
The magic of my mother's kiss,
The softness of my mother's dress
When I would seek her, in distress.
Against her shoulder I would press,
And rich the comfort I would gain,
And deep the solace I would find —
The sudden easing of my pain
That melted in her glances kind.

Things I remember are like these —
The sparkling gestures of the trees,
My morning-glories, purple red,
The dew upon the pansy bed,
And where the garden's fullness led,
The sweetest thing I've tasted yet,
Something I never shall forget —
Strange how a flavor haunts and clings!
No other perfume can be found
Amid the wealth of luscious things,
Like ripe tomatoes on the ground.

Things I remember — how they throng!
My mother said, if I did wrong,
Yet told her frankly every day,
The Christian's joy would come my way.
And so, whenever I would pray
For aunts and uncles and the rest,
The long, long story of my guilt
Chapter by chapter was confessed . . .
How I, not sister Bess, had spilt
The ink that spoiled the carpet's hue;
And how the saucer clattered down,
And of itself just broke in two!
And how, when she had gone to town

The neighbor's children were quite wild,
And I had been a naughty child.

And yet, of all the things that shine
And beckon through the lovely years,
One memory I hold as mine,
I treasure it with happy tears.
The time I disobeyed the rule,
And caused my mother many a sigh,
Romping with children after school,
Nor telling her the where or why.
I see her as she looked that day —
I knew my hour had surely come!
Though not an angry word she'd say
As solemnly she led me home.

And then, I saw within her hand
The symbol of my punishment —
It seemed I scarce could understand
So stern a thing for me was meant.
And so I stared into her eyes,
And she, perforce, looked back at me . . .
When suddenly, to my surprise,
I knew not how the change could be —
She caught and kissed me, held me tight,
Just like a child that had done right!

Well, all I have to say is this —
When folks defend the chastening rod:
It seems to me a mother's kiss
Is just a little nearer God.
I know there's nothing I would spare,
No joy my heart would not give up,
If I could shield her life from care
And drink the sorrow in her cup.
I know my life is clean and straight
Because, although my faults were great,

She trusted me and loved me, too,
With faith in all I strove to do.
But most of all, because that day,
When punishment was on my head,
She could not bring her wrath to play,
But caught me in her arms instead!

HOW THE END CAME

(THE STORY OF ONE MOTHER)

To-day she would end it all. What use was life to her,
A woman old before her time; a drudge, a door-mat, trodden incessantly
By heedless feet of selfish children and inconsiderate husband?
What was her sin, that they should so misuse her? Only that she was deaf to everything
Except their comfort.
Only that she had bravely lived the rôle of wife and mother
For twenty burdened years.
Only that she had given up her own desires, one by one,
To make her family happy.
Now they despised her. He . . . once her impassioned lover and staunch mate . . .
Frowned with displeasure when he looked at her.
The children thought of her . . . if ever they thought at all . . .
In terms of breakfast, dinner, a clean house and well-darned stockings.
Not to anyone was she an individual. Not to a living soul was she a personality.
She, whose life had been perfection, bitterly faced defeat.
She, who had done no wrong, was punished like a sinner.

Five blocks away, at the end of the street, gleamed the wide river,
Gold-brown in the sun.
Soon she would reach it . . . and dear oblivion.
But she was tired . . . so tired; her aching feet were leaden. The distance seemed eternity.
Resting a moment in the shelter of a doorway,
Her eyes gazed emptily upon the seething street.
"Madam, permit me . . . you are looking for a number?"
Heavily, she stared at the proprietress. Absently, she passed within the door . . .
"Fifi, a glass of water, quickly! Madam is faint. Hurry!"

* * * *

Nature, the vast Observer, has an eternal sense of humor,
Even if we have not.
This was a Beauty Parlor, a place for idle women.
She, who had started for the river, to end her grim existence,
Found herself havened in quite a different refuge.
Here came the foolish members of her sex,
To be powdered and rouged and dyed.
Here came the parasites, the vampires . . .
"Madam, you wished for something? A shampoo . . . a massage?"
Flushing, she faced her own reflection in the mirror.
Grimly, she made acknowledgment . . .
No, it would never do to let them find her . . . even dead . . .
Looking as she looked now.
Then came a startling thought . . . a new emotion . . .
Mingled with shame and guilt.
For the sake of her children . . . for the sake of those at home,
She must be neat and comely when the searchers found her . . .

"Try to relax a little more . . . turn the head, so!
Madam will soon be feeling very fine indeed. Now for the nice shampoo,
Which makes the world all roses and contentment!"
She, the mother of stalwart sons and growing daughters;
She, the defender of all the old traditions;
She, to whom life forever spelled self-abnegation
And stern devotion to stern ideals . . .
She it was who sat in that seductive chair, yielding to vanity,
Even as the silliest of her sex!
"Just for one day," she breathed, while perfume saturated every sense.
"Just for one day . . . I shall think only of myself.
I've thought of others all my life . . . slaved and struggled and sacrificed . . . all for them."
It was enchantment, mastering every nerve and fiber.
It was bewitchment, bearing her off to green and fragrant hills,
Where suddenly . . . with violets in her hands . . .
Came the sweet girl who once had been herself.

* * * *

"But, mother, what can you have done to yourself? It's like a miracle!
Girls, come and look at mother! Isn't it too astounding?"
They were like birdlings, fluttering about her gay plumage.
"Mother, why didn't you dress like this before? Why, mother, it's a crime . . .
Look at her eyes . . . they're positively dancing . . . here comes father!
What'll he have to say?"

* * * *

"Barbara . . . my own sweet Bab!" . . . he had not called her that for fifteen years or longer . . .

"What is this mystery? How did it happen? Well, I declare!
Who'd have believed it? Look at yourself . . . look at yourself in the mirror and see!"

* * * *

Suddenly came the revelation, while she stood staring at her glorified reflection.
"Now I see! Now I understand. It isn't wickedness, it isn't vanity . . .
It's being true to God. He made us in His image, didn't He? . . . Well,
We've got to polish the windows, to let the soul shine through!"

~ ~ ~

TO A HEEDLESS DAUGHTER

From thinking hard and working long
Your mother's lips forgot their song,
Your mother's hair turned softly gray
From thinking, planning, day by day.

Listen and think awhile with me,
Of her, whose grief you do not see.
O girl, you must not break her heart.
You from your mother must not part.

From thinking hard and working long
She moves unnoticed in the throng —
A figure void of charm or grace —
And there are wrinkles in her face.

Yet — she had dimples when a lass,
And people stared to see her pass.
Had you been burdened just as she,
Your smiles and dimples might not be.

So great her beauty was, and rare!
And yet she chose a life of care;
She lived for sacrifice and worth
In bringing little souls to birth.

She gave herself that you might live,
She suffered all that you might give,
To needy earth, your womanhood
In deeds of purity and good.

Her hope, her love, her heart, are yours;
Her life into your living pours.
Oh, go to her and clasp her hand.
Tell her at last you understand!

MOTHERS

This to the modern mother would I say,
Fighting the fevered battles of to-day,
Whether in poverty from sun till dark
She struggles grimly on to reach the mark,
Or gayly in the high courts of the town
Offers a dazzling gift to gain renown,
Or on the lesser level tries her strength,
Hoping and praying for her goal at length —
This would I say, and say it from my heart:
O mothers, great and noble is your part,
And higher than the human eye can see
Tower the duties of maternity.

All that you clamor for has fleeting worth
Beside the living soul you brought to birth;
That little life a candle is, whose fire
Flickers or triumphs with your soul's desire.

Your slightest breath may quench the feeble light
And send its yearnings back into the night. . . .
Be to your child a close and kindling flame —
Give to your child what you would give to fame.

'Tis not enough that motherhood should feed
With happy nourishment the body's need.
'Tis not enough the mother's hand should make
Pleasure and comfort for her children's sake.
All outer needs may motherhood supply
And yet be callous to a deeper cry.
For she who toils the hardest often finds
But little leisure for the hungry minds,
The glowing questions of her eager brood —
Yet thriving souls of children must have food!

O mothers, how I know the weight you bear!
My heart is with you in your every care.
No blame I hold for you who give so much —
And yet, a moment comes when just the touch
Of love upon a little heart may bring
More healing than a whole life's offering.
Oh, sit awhile and smooth the restless hand,
Look in his eyes and say: "I understand!"
Give of your spirit's essence unto him
Who brings a greeting from the cherubim.
Come! Leave the clamor of the day awhile —
And bask an hour in the Creator's smile!

DAUGHTERHOOD

The bards have sung of motherhood so long,
When shall a fair and righteous pen proclaim
The glories that to daughterhood belong,
And summon justice to the daughter's name?

I saw a daughter young and sweet and slim
Yield all her strength to ease a father's load.
Her ardor and her beauty spent for him,
His need of her the one continual goad
That conquered every yearning of her youth
And made her old and grim before her time.
While he — he took it all, nor guessed the truth,
Nor saw her shriveled womanhood as crime.

I saw a girl give up her darling chance
To find a freer life, a happier fate,
Because her selfish elders looked askance,
And blindly, coldly kept her from her mate.
Her brothers thrived and went the appointed way,
Mated at mating time, their lives fulfilled.
The daughter faded, lonelier every day,
Till now the hunger in her heart is stilled.

O priests and poets, when you sing of mothers,
Remember there are daughters noble, too,
Who give their lives for fathers and for brothers —
I beg you tell the deeds that daughters do!

TO A BRIDE'S MOTHER

You shall see Heaven through her eyes;
Through her shall you renew
Your Paradise.
Remembering your joy, her joy shall seem
The clear fulfillment of a long-told dream.

The happy road you went, she too shall go;
The mysteries you found, she too shall know.
She shall become as you, and you as she —
Such is the beauty of Life's alchemy!

You shall again be as a girl, because
The chilling tide of time has given pause
To let the glory of the Gulf Stream in.
Oh, once again your youth shall you begin —
For she you love is loved again and brings
The cure of Love to all your questionings.

You shall see Heaven through her eyes —
For Love shall give you back your Paradise!

Section XVIII

Money and Jewels

THE BROWN MARBLE

The sky is an azure pocket,
Storing God's sparkling gems,
His constellations, moons and suns
And angel diadems.
And earth is a small brown marble
Mid many a precious stone,
Yet someone loves that little toy;
Calls it His own.

The sky is an azure pocket,
God holds it next His heart.
His jeweled chains and coronets,
He knows them all apart.
Perhaps He calls them by their names —
Aldebaran and Mars,
Orion and the Pleiades
And Venus, queen of stars.
But when He names the planet Earth
And turns it in His hand,
I think He feels the kind of joy
Mortals would understand.

MONEY

I think money and the need of money was designed
Just to let loose the passionate spirit of mankind;
A vent for that terrific inner yearning
Which keeps us always working, striving, earning,
And seems to make the humblest life immense and good
In the great struggle for our daily food.

Believe me, this fuss about money
Goes not to the root of the thing.

Abolish the coin, to some other symbol
Man's ardor would spring.
Let silver and gold be naught,
But leave *creative thought*
And swiftly would some other goal replace
The "money madness" of the human race.

Your friend who rails at money and calls it crime
To treasure even a dime —
What does he do when his rainy hour comes true?
He asks a favor of you!
He who is loudest in his crying out
Must some day cease and calmly look about
To find the funds to carry on his plan.
And if he be an energetic man,
Must push and toil and struggle like the rest
To meet this planet's test.

Come! Let us question: What shall the symbol be
To tell man's future force and set him free?
Shall it be stars or stuff of the Milky Way?
Shall it be ultra fine as violet ray?
Intangible as ethers, vapor thin?
Yet gold and silver — these, you say, are sin;
The "root of evil" and the tempter's snare
Within the dollar bill we fold with care!

Money for money's sake . . . ah, there's the wrong! . . .
The flaming goal that lures the unreckoning throng.
But money as the good means to a good end . . .
Call it not evil, friend!

JEWELS

Give me crystals for my doubt,
 Pearls to soothe my pain,
Let my brow be wreathed about
 With diamonds like rain.
Give me amber like a dart
 Of passion prisoned clear,
Lay a sapphire on my heart
 To cool and conquer fear.

Give me rubies when the day
 Darkens to despair,
Deck me with their rich display,
 Twine them in my hair.
Oh, I know that gems are sent
 Just to give us cheer;
This is what God must have meant
 When He put them here.

Give me topaz till my days
 Fill with mellow fire,
Let me capture with my gaze
 An emerald's desire.
Opals are an angel's dream
 Breathed upon with mist;
All my soul is set agleam
 Lured by amethyst.

Give me crystals for my doubt,
 Pearls to soothe my pain,
Let my brow be wreathed about
 With diamonds like rain.
Yet, O Life, unless you bring
 One great jewel more,
All your favors I shall fling
 Worthless at your door.

Should he come whose love is mine,
Gladly will I stand,
Asking only one divine
Bestowal from his hand.
Hidden treasures of the sod,
Bringing splendor near,
Jewels are the fire of God . . .
But you are more, my dear!

A SONG OF FLOWING GOLD

Come, let us sing of flowing gold!
Let us conquer the fears that hypnotize
The mass of men to economize,
Gripping us all in a strangle hold,
So none are mighty and few are bold!

It is easy enough to economize
If you seldom buy and you never lend,
If you shut your door to the needy friend
And wear queer clothes that are not your size—
It is easy enough to economize!

Oh, it's simple enough to practice thrift
If you give the grocer but little hope,
If you hoard the matches and spare the soap
And flout the poor when they ask a lift.
It is easy enough to economize
If you buy no corn and you sow no grain;
If you tune your life to a dull refrain,
If you risk no fortune and seek no prize,
It is easy enough to economize!

But who can breathe in a noose so tight?
Who cares to perish when life is here?

Go, loose the world from its craven fear,
For only in freedom is anything right.
Give me a week of flowing gold,
With kindled powers alive and free,
And I shall trust in the years to be . . .
I shall be bold as the gods are bold!

Section XIX

Mastery

MASTERY

I claim that man is master who can take
Life's harsh material, whate'er it be,
And from the fabric of misfortune make
A princely garment for the world to see.
I hold that man is master who can stand
Rugged amid the taunts of malice hurled,
Saying, "Behold, the king is in command!"
Until his name be cleared before the world.

I hold him great who laughs in hunger's eyes,
The while he keeps his compact with the goal,
Turning his back on Fortune which denies
The higher quest of his enduring soul.
I say that man is fortunate who bears
The challenge and the torture of the test,
Upon his back a multitude of cares,
The courage of the gods within his breast.

I hold him lord whose harness is the will,
Whose lust is but a steed that he may ride;
Who says to raging pulses, "Peace, be still!
For Mind is now the master to decide."
Not cravenly to wither or to pine,
Nor pale and passionless drag through his days,
But with the lordliness that is divine,
Urging his energies to finer ways.

He who can lift his longing to the planes
Where passion mingles with a nobler fire;
He who can send the ardor of his veins
To find the spirit's strata of desire. . . .
Say what we will of grandeur or renown,
He is the king, 'tis he deserves the crown!

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"MAN TRIUMPHANT"

(IN RECOGNITION OF DAVID EDSTROM'S MASTERPIECE, THE VICTORY MONUMENT OF THAT NAME)

The world is sick of failure, tired of sin;
Our worn humanity is weighted down
With massive superstitions that begin
Back in the dungeon place of mortal woe,
Deep in the crude traditions that have laid
More victims low than ever death betrayed.

Humanity is lifted by its dreams
And symboled hopes. No higher may it rise.
Oh, let us look on Victory that stands
A trinity of Purpose, Faith and Power;
Lifting the serpent with rejoicing hands,
The race triumphant risen as a tower.
No higher than his Hope shall man ascend,
Nor shall he die, until his Dream shall end.

The world is done with monuments that tell
Disaster and destruction. Let us raise
The beckoning white symbol that shall spell
Courage and beauty and the goals of Truth;
Telling God's Dream as He would have it told,
That man may grow to what his eyes behold!

~ ~ ~

RED SPIRITED

We hear so often — oh, we so often hear —
The term "red blooded," sounding at our ear.
When shall we say "red spirited" and mean it? When
Shall we perceive that we are supermen?
Have you not known the spirit's passion?
Have you not felt God fashion
A wondrous thought in you?

Then stand! Be true.
Be not afraid this day
To deeply, gladly say,
"I am red spirited." For he who knows
The fountain of the blood that in him flows,
Finds in his soul the deep enduring flame.

He is the conqueror — of humankind;
He is the coming victor who shall tame
The snarling jungle of the fleshly mind.
Not till the Spirit rules within its place,
Not till the body yields to God's desire
And lust is vanquished in the Spirit's fire,
Shall woman bring to birth the super race.

THE KING

He said to his lusts: "Be still, be still!"
He dared his passion to lift its head
While he was master and in command.
He reined his lusts with fiery rein:
"I am the lord of life," he said,
Nor heeded hurt nor dreaded pain.
"Lord of the flesh I take my stand."

And lo, like a flock of homing birds,
Beasts no longer, but golden things,
His passions soared at the kingly words
With dreams for bodies and thoughts for wings.
With luminous deeds to help mankind
He went his way as a man redeemed
To feed the hungry and heal the blind . . .
And the world is better because he dreamed.

He said to his lusts: "Be still, be still!"
And the beasts made answer: "I will, I will!"

WHICH OF THESE THREE?

Some deal with Life as highway robbers do,
And grip her by the throat with strangle hold,
Crying: "At last we've got the best of you —
Give up your gold!"
They strip her arms of jewels, while her hands
Are held aloft in weakness and despair;
They bind her to her doom with cruel bands,
And flee the blood that trickles through her hair.

Yet Life at last is judge and has her word;
She will not die through any act of men,
But like the Spring that ever has recurred,
She stands arrayed in jeweled robes again.
And they who thought to vanquish her are left
Themselves forlorn, imprisoned and bereft.

And others deal with Life as beggars weak,
Fawning and cringing for a crust of bread,
Having so feeble knowledge how to speak,
They crumple up the knee and bow the head.
Yet Life for these has pity with her scorn —
So deep her bounty and so wide her grace,
So eager that her sons shall hail the morn
And stand erect to greet her face to face.

For only they who meet her thus may know
How Life, the terror, is a comrade sweet,
Who shares the perils of the path we go,
And gives us food and laves our burning feet.
And pointing to the hills we yet shall ride:
"On! For I travel ever at your side."

MAN THE DELIVERER

Man himself must arise,
Shake sorrow from his eyes,
Refuse the chains that bind him,
Put fear and death behind him —
Man himself must arise!

Man himself must declare!
Must answer his own prayer,
Must be the Dream he cherished,
Forget the self that perished —
Man himself must declare.

Man must his saviour be,
Nor seek eternally
Some higher proclamation
To trumpet his salvation —
Man must his saviour be!

Man himself must ascend!
Nor wait till time shall end
For Heaven's vague fruition.
In vain his wild petition —
Man himself must ascend.

Man himself must decide
What path his Fate shall ride.
The olden gates are falling,
The voice of Progress calling —
Man himself must decide!

Believe that in thyself resides
The power that will rule the tides
Of passion, arrogance and hate;
That in thyself the highest fate
Makes mock of dim ancestral fear.
Believe that thou to God art dear;
That He hath dowered thee with strength,
That all thy noble dreams at length
Shall sail like lordly ships of gold
Into the harbor's goodly fold.

Say to thyself a thousand times,
No matter what thy faults or crimes,
No matter what thy fear or sin:
"The appetite for right shall win."
There comes a time when all excess
Is ugly. When our souls confess
The emptiness of stupid lust;
When folly falls into the dust;
When, stirring sweet and strong as wine,
A new desire, a sense divine
Leaps in the mind, the soul, the heart,
And in the brain new visions start.

The ardor for material things
Is lifted to the realm of wings;
The thirst for drink, the greed for gain,
The thousand things that lead to pain,
Transfigured by the spirit's fire
Blossom into a vast desire
For happiness of higher worth.
The godly nature comes to birth,
Burning as beautiful as flame,
Putting the lower self to shame.
Oh, stronger than the strongest sin,
The appetite for good shall win!

BE GLAD OF ARDOR

Be glad, be glad of ardor in the veins,
Nor bid thy struggle cease.
When zest is gone, what happiness remains?
Pray not, pray not for peace!
Be glad of turmoil pounding in the blood,
Of dreams that run like lava through the mind;
No greater fortune shalt thou ever find
Than youth and hope, with longing at the flood.

Be glad, be glad of torture in the heart—
For torture bodeth good.
What though thy passion rendeth thee apart,
Thy pain misunderstood?
Oh, take this truth from one who knoweth well
How Age with stupid calm would kill the soul . . .
For thou art king with passion in control.
Oh, listen not to what the calm would tell!

Be glad of pain, and yearning unfulfilled.
Be glad of hurts that sting, yet cannot slay.
Rejoice that thou canst suffer and be thrilled,
Canst leap with courage to another day.
Let not thy fires in foolish ways be spent,
Nor yet with folly turn thy passion cold.
The world hath need of thee a thousandfold . . .
Go, take thy place within the firmament!

Section XX

"*NEW WORLD*"

SONG OF THE NEW WORLD

I sing the song of a new Dawn waking,
A new wind shaking
The children of men.
I say the hearts that are nigh to breaking
Shall leap with gladness and live again.
Over the woe of the world, appalling,
Wild and sweet as a bugle cry,
Sudden I hear a new voice calling —
"Beauty is nigh!"

Beauty is nigh! Let the world believe it.
Love has covered the fields of dead.
Healing is here! Let the earth receive it,
Greeting the Dawn with lifted head.
I sing the song of the sin forgiven,
The deed forgotten, the wrong undone.
Lo, in the East, where the dark is riven,
Shines the rim of the rising sun.
Healing is here! O brother, sing it!
Laugh, O heart, that has grieved so long.
Love will gather your woe and fling it
Over the world in waves of song.

Hearken, mothers, and hear them coming —
Heralds crying the day at hand.
Faint and far as the sound of drumming,
Hear their summons across the land.
Look, O fathers! Your eyes were holden —
Armies throng where the dead have lain.
Fiery steeds and chariots golden —
Gone is the dream of soldiers slain.
Sing, oh, sing of a new world waking,
Sing of creation just begun.
Glad is the earth when morn is breaking —
Man is facing the rising sun!

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THE GOD THAT I LOVE

The God that I love
Is present everywhere.
He's in the dark sea water,
He's in the silver air.
I find Him in the country
Or I find Him in the town;
He holds no fearful scepter
And He wears no kingly crown.

The God that I love
Is in the human things.
I hear Him when the wind is low
Or when the kettle sings.
They say He's in a far-off sky
Where angel people are,
But in my heart I feel Him shine
As warm as any star.

The God that I love
Needn't say a word,
For when I'm disobedient
It's just as if I heard —
He only needs to smile at me
From out a silken rose,
When all the " evil " in my heart
Just crumples up and goes.

The God that I love
Knows nothing of " the fall."
He doesn't torture people,
Or punish them at all.
He makes a Law of beauty
And we break it at our will . . .
'Tis we who build the battlefields
And sow the world with ill.

The God that I love
Is very close to me.
He's something I am *sure* of
While I don't exactly see.
The pulse within my temples,
The patter in my wrist,
The peace that comes with afterglow
When earth is crimson-kist . . .

Oh, these are God and speak to me
Whenever I would pray;
For oh, the God that I love
Is God of every day!

THE SELF SUPREME

Have you ever beheld in surprise
A Self looking out of your eyes
Gazing back from the mirror at you —
A Stranger majestic and wise,
Beholding the deed you would do?
A mystery burning, immense,
Flaring suddenly into your view,
Astounding, intense
As lightning out of the blue?

Have you seen how the Stranger withdrew
To the depths of your wondering stare,
While you, when your longing would dare,
Made questioning: "*Who are you?*"
Marveling half in fear,
"Who is the Stranger here?
Why have we never met before
At the eye's mysterious door?"

Only be true to the Being back of your eyes!
Only be true to the Self supernal and free —
One who has come from the realm of radiant skies
Your Guardian Self to be.
Only remember, wherever your path may lead,
One who will know your need.
Say, as you think of the Angel Self that looked at you,
"I will be true!

"I will be true to the Being back of my eyes.
I will be true, whatever wrongs are done.
Others may fail and fall with weak replies —
I will be true.
I will be strong when pain would make me weak;
I will be brave, when danger comes my way.
I will the clear, courageous message speak,
O Golden Self that gazed at me that day!
Immortal Self whose glory pierced me through,
Oh, never shall I fail, remembering you!"

THE NEW GOSPEL

The Seer

We do not need to die to go to Heaven,
Nor need the body from the soul be riven
To pass in beauty through the Eternal door . . .
For lo, we live in Heaven now and evermore!

We do not need to die to go to Heaven,
For daily through our human lives like leaven
Divinity is seething hour by hour
With strange, ecstatic power.

A Pastor to His Congregation

I, as I look in your faces,
You, as you look at me,
We are not forms
That Nature warms,
Nor godlings yet to be.
We are not flesh or muscle,
We are not brain or bone . . .
We are none of these alone.
I, as I look in your faces,
You, as you look at me,
Live now in immortal spaces,
Where Life is Deity!

The Healer

Though the broken instrument suffer and fail,
The God within must seek the grail.
The God within must heal and make
The body perfect for its sake.
Kneel not to graven gods of fear
That haunt the chambers of the mind;
Only the living God is here,
His heritage will save mankind!

THE MEANING OF THE AGE

The times are hard indeed, I hear you say.
Rebuke my optimism as you may,
I claim the times are glorious and fair
Because of hidden tidings that they bear.
The times but stagger to a doom foretold
By all illumined messengers of old—
The greatest utterance of broken law
This planet ever saw;

Of law that knows nor thrones, nor cults, nor men,
But strikes its chord again and yet again,
While they who answer not the Eternal Strain
Groan with the dissonance of mortal pain.

If, when men sinned, no outer sign appeared,
How could a new society be reared?
How may the soul improve, unless it see
The old must yield because the new must be?
Oh, let us look beyond the bitter day
Of doubt and terror, famine and decay.
Let us behold the coming world within
The shattered husk of agony and sin.
The times are hard? I grant it true indeed,
The heart is wrung by every cry of need,
Helpless, we hear our brother's moan of pain,
We see the sinless with the guilty slain.

Yet such the fruit of all that went before —
Such is the harvest that our planting bore,
Such is the failure that the old hath wrought
That we by Higher Wisdom may be taught.
Failure but ushers in a better age,
Grief is the mighty turning of her page.
We should be strong, and hold our courage high,
Receive the benediction of the sky.
Nor fear, nor doubt, nor death should touch us now
Who offer up the sworn Crusader's vow —
"Deus Vult!" — even as they of old.
Oh, let us nobly stand till the new age unfold!

A SONG OF NEW DAYS

Let us get away from the old ways,
The dead ways, the cold ways,
Get away from old thoughts,
That cling to us and kill;
Let us go to meet the new days
Breaking through the old days,
Bursting like a flower at the sun's ripe will.

Let us get away from the old molds,
The hard molds, the set molds,
Get away from the old creeds,
That bind us to our doom.
Let us do away with dry rot —
Dead forms are best forgot —
Push away the husk and give the blossom room!

Let us get away from old fears,
Sad fears, black fears,
Get away from superstition
Heavy as the sod.
Come and greet the new years,
Breaking through the old years —
Find the living Purpose of the living God!

FORWARD!

Whether we think as Darwin does, or not,
This legend of the ape is best forgot.
Why, even granting it is truth — what then?
What hope has this to-day for living men?
Why bid us turn our eyes
Back to the darkness of the soul's disguise,
Unless with equal vim we speak this truth
To the alert, aspiring brain of youth:

"If such be true,
If 'twas indeed an ape that fathered you
And you are what you are to-day — a *man* —
What glory beckons, even in this plan!
What finer forces draw you on and on
To beauties earth has never looked upon . . .
Oh, think into the future, and behold
A being such as man has never told . . .
For Power pulls you up, not back, and you shall see
The flowering of a greater destiny."

Oh, why not dwell
On the *encouragement* that evolution finds
Instead of grimly, stupidly repeating
The ancient horror to receptive minds?
And if we bow to Science, why not preach
The whole and not a part of what they teach
Who bid us go beyond tradition's spell,
And thus tell *all* that Truth would have us tell!

GREATNESS

We deem a soul is great if it can feel
The mighty harmony of wind and sea;
If it can Truth and loveliness reveal,
Or glimpse to us conditions yet to be.
But greater will the soul be that can find
A something deeper still in sea and wave,
Knowing his soul as greater than the wind,
Seeing that in himself and all mankind
Is power to save.

We deem the mind is great if it can climb
Through science, to the secrets of the vast;
Or stumble through the trenches of all time
To find the hidden knowledge of the past.

But greater in the future shall he be
Who delves into that deep and holy place —
The hidden woe of all humanity,
Pledging the passion of his life to free
A shackled race!

Section XXI

Love

THE CHOOSING

If God should say to me,
"Thus shall the choosing be:
To live forever from thy Love apart,
Yet have the proudest wishes of thy heart —
Beauty and fame and golden usefulness —
The dreams thine aspiration would confess,
Or, with thy soul's Belovèd at thy side,
To brave the bitter world with broken pride;
To find at last the dungeon and the rod" —
This would I say to God:

"Give me the hard and unforgiving waste —
I yearn its loveliness to taste.
Give me the dungeon's overwhelming night,
Give me the bitter sorrow and the blight.
For at his kiss the barren earth would wake,
Deep in the cavern Heaven's light would break,
Glory would leap from out the cruel rod,
Lilies would blossom in the barren sod,
And seraphim would sing where'er we trod" —
This would I say to God!

A YOUTH TO HIS MAIDEN

A swan in the moonlight,
Snow under sun;
Hills when September has richly begun;
Woods in October,
Wine-colored air. . . .
Yet none of these things
With my love can compare!

You are winds out of Northland;
I reel from the blast,
But April and May will come singing at last;
And June is a temptress — I wave her good-bye
To comfort my soul with the ale of July.

A swan in the moonlight,
A ship on the sea —
Oh, this is the look of your beauty to me.
If jewels could say it,
What gem would reveal
The blaze of devotion a lover may feel?

Would emerald, hyacinth, jasper or jade
Give speech to the long-hidden heart of a maid?
So futile are symbols of ruby or pearl —
One title will tell it: My girl, my girl!

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

From that first glance, they trod immortal grass.
Before them had a new world come to pass,
As two who made their exit from the dusk,
Twin souls emerging from their common husk
Into the gorgeous sun, the splendid air,
And ecstasy too beautiful to bear.

STARLIGHT AND SYRINGAS

Starlight and syringas
And a nesting bird so near
That I could brush it with my sigh
And hear its throb of fear.

Starlight and syringas
And a sky immense and still,
With Venus like a candle flame
Above the darkest hill.

Starlight and syringas,
But you beyond my reach.
Oh, would that I were candle flame
Or had the twilight's speech!

Oh, would I were a velvet moth
To follow where you go—
I'd beat upon the window pane;
My signal you should know.

Or I would glow as fireflies do
Within the dewy grass;
I'd fling a sudden light for you
To hail you as you pass.

Or humble as the cricket song
I'd strike my note of cheer;
I'd keep you from discouragement,
I'd take away your fear.

All these, all these are feeble things
But I am feebler yet,
For I am but a woman frail
Whose soul may not forget.

Starlight and syringas
And a little nesting bird;
I'll send a wingèd thought to you
And dream that you have heard!

LOVE IN SPRING

The Flood

Love is like a rainstorm, beating me down;
Beating me close to the earth —
Life-giving earth —
Bringing my soul new birth.
O blessèd rain, blessèd torrent!
I love you, I crave you. Every cool, electric drop of you,
All the washing, pelting force of you I love.
The flood of your eyes, dearest,
The drenching light of your eyes —
It is like rain, making bright the meadow.
My dripping heart bends before you,
With glad leaves glistening in the wet and the cool.
Love is like the rainstorm, beating me down!

At Night

Every night, I gather you into the fold;
I reach and herd all my thoughts of you
Under the cover of my heart,
And shepherd them like tender lambs, white and plaintive.
You are so far away from me, you do not know
How every night I summon all my thoughts,
And so at last, I find and gather you
Home to my breast.

Dawn

I heard you calling in the night,
The star-cool night, so tall and still;
And now I see you in the light
Spanning the eastern hill.
Seeking your face to love and bless,
My face against the Dawn I press;

I hold my heart against the wind,
Hoping your heart to find.
O lover, come and be to me
The flood, the dawn, the wind, the sea —
All these, all these my mate must be!

THE CRY ETERNAL

Oh, love me, dearest, love me with thine eyes
That drink me up, and, thirsting, drink again.
For I would be thy chalice of surprise,
Held proudly for my lordliest of men.
And I would yield my spirit unto thee,
Drawn sunward as the vapors of the sea —
Oh, love me, dearest, love me with thine eyes!

Ah, claim me, sweetheart, with thy reaching hands
That seek to clasp my own in living chains,
Swift to obey the urge of love's demands —
The great primeval call within the veins,
Older than man and yet forever new —
For, dearest, look! My hands are reaching, too.
Ah, claim me, dear, with thy belovèd hands.

Oh, love me, dearest, let me be the goal
Of mind and heart, of body and of brain,
And I will pledge the fullness of my soul
To prove the price of loving not in vain.
O king of lovers, set my spirit free,
United now eternally to thee,
That love may know fulfillment and be whole!

CONFIRMATION

All the little grasses in the woods said, "Yes!"
All the trees said it, over and over —
All the ruddy wild things, eager to confess —
Honeysuckle, brierwood, brave young clover.
"Take what we tell you and believe it true —
He loves you, he loves you, he loves but you."

All the little bushes by the garden walk
Stirring at my footsteps, beckoned to me sweetly.
Prickly little rose stems, anxious for a talk,
Plucked me by the dress sleeve, captured me completely.
"Whether you believe it or reject, 'tis true;
He loves you, he loves you, he loves but you!"

Ramblers at the doorpost, larkspur on the lawn,
Peonies and columbine all the day repeating;
Fireflies and starlight saying it till dawn —
But no one to tell me if the word be cheating!
How shall I be knowing if it's false or true?
Only one may tell me. . . . Dearest, it is you!

LOVE DEFIANT

Who says we shall not love?
I defy him!
Who claims a right above?
I deny him!
What force may pull the planet worlds apart?
What hand shall tear me from my lover's heart?

Who says we shall not wed?
Let us shame him!
Our laughter on his head,
Though we blame him!

For youth may laugh, when older hearts deny,
For youth may laugh, though older hearts deny.

Who says we shall not kiss?
Let him stay us!
For glory like to this
He shall pray us!
For God it is who looks from lovers' eyes,
For God it is who dwells in lovers' eyes!

THE CHANCE TO LOVE

If some sweet space could but be set apart,
Free from the prying eyes of judging, curious men;
Some sweet, dear place betwixt the earth and sky
Where we together for one little day
Could find the unopened pages of the heart;
If you could utter all you yearn to say
And I could answer you, before I die. . . .
Oh, then,
I could go gladly on my way again.

But this despair,
This fretting and this chafing and this care
For what the stupid world will say or think! . . .
O Love, surely in all thy universe of skies
There is some spot,
Some cloudy place upon the evening's brink
Where we, my beautiful and I,
May meet and suffer not.
Where longing hands at last may interlace,
And kisses fall upon the belovèd's eyes . . .
No room can hold the beauty of our first embrace.
God! Find us a place.

LOVERS BY THE RIVER

Mist-black, the silence glows;
The darkness flings
Glamour about us in great eddying rings.
The river's clustered lamps in sparkling rows,
Like jewel-fire from velvet, pierce the shade
Where you and I, like flowers in a pool,
Together lean to take the evening cool.

Thrush-brown, the river gleams,
And fluid space
Pauses to take the image of your face.
The universe has narrowed to our dreams . . .
Yet space has let us loose,
And we who were before
Two separate souls upon the breast of night,
Spirit to spirit, wondrously unite.

MY HEART'S HAVEN

My heart will wing its way to you,
Dear one, despite my will's decree;
Despite the stern voice in my soul
Which says that love is not for me.
Rebellious bird beyond control,
Beating its wings to reach the blue,
My heart, exulting to be free,
Goes winging, singing, straight to you.

Ah, through what woe and bitterness
My heart will cleave its way to you!
Through sullen hours of storm and stress,
A lone bird longing for the blue,
A lost bird, battling with the night,
Nearing at last a sky of gold,

Beating its way beyond the blight —
Ah, take it, dearest, to its fold;
Gather it close within your breast
And bid its weary wings find rest!

LOVE

Thou art as haunting as the wild
Fugitive fragrance in the dusk,
As when one pauses, pierced with joy,
Hooded by dim green silences
Asking, "Whence is it — what — and where?"
The subtle perfume in the air
Eludes and teases. So thou art
A tantalizing mystery —
A lure, a cheat, a hope, a pang
Of beauty one may not embrace.
One moment crushed against my heart,
Another — lost in ether's arms!
And when I think to clasp thee close,
To hold my face against thy face,
Thou laughest, fleeing with the mist,
And lips forget that they have kissed.
Yet in the cup of life distilled
In deeds of loveliness and grace,
Once more the heart with joy is filled —
And love, reclaimed, has found its place.

THE GARDEN IN THE SKY

The stars are pansies in the wet Spring night,
Wistful yellow pansies, winged with tender light.
Let us go and pluck them, dearest, you and I —
Pluck the golden pansies from the furrowed sky.

I am far from you, dear; you are far from me,
But God has made a garden that we both may see;
Planted it with star-bloom, sprinkled it with fire,
That you and I may meet and find our heart's desire.

The moon is a lily on a silver stem,
Guarding all the buttercups, brooding over them;
Nurturing the pansies, purple, white, and blue —
We may find them always if our hearts are true.
Let us lean together, dearest, you and I,
Breathing in the perfume of the midnight sky.

The wind is a shallop that will bear us on,
Till the yellow buttercups pale against the dawn;
Till the startled pansies take their wingèd flight
Like a swarm of butterflies faint against the light.

Lonely we may be, Love, on the earth apart,
Here in Heaven's meadow are we heart to heart.
Let us love the garden spread for our delight,
Let us dream together in the soft Spring night.

ONE ONLY

God has set my soul to long for one soul —
 One only in all the land;
Has curved my will to follow one goal
 As the fond wave follows the sand.

God has made my soul to thrill to one voice
 As harp strings answer the wind;
It was He who uttered the golden choice
 That mated us, mind to mind.

When the Spring is thrusting her blades, newborn,
And the brown twig burns like a flame,
Once more I may laugh in the April morn,
Once more may I sigh his name.

I am sad for the hearts that never rest
But flutter from mate to mate . . .
I want no goal but my lover's breast,
No fate but my lover's fate.

A LOVER SINGS OF LILIES

Lilies at noon, with silver day upon you;
Lilies at twilight with the moonlight on you;
Lilies like snow upon their Easter stalk,
Lilies like seraphs by my garden walk —
But none so wondrous as my Lily White
Who lives beside me, morning, noon and night;
My love, more beautiful than bird or bloom.
She and she only lights this earthly room
With luster fairer than the lily's glow
Because I love, because I love her so!

"SPOONING"

They have come out to try the enchanted weather —
This is their only chance to be together.
The crowded rooms at home give little space
For love's great miracle, that blooms apace.
Sisters and brothers — all the spying folk
Who look on love and loving as a joke;
Mother and father, utterly forgetting
Youth's rainbow setting —
All have conspired to keep these two apart,
But here, in public, are they heart to heart.

Here, in a trolley car where all may look,
Life opens wide for them her sacred book,
And startled eyes look deep in eyes that show
The angel secrets only lovers know.
"Vulgar!" "Absurd!" and "Silly!" say the wise
Who gaze on life with disillusioned eyes.
And they whose hearts are brittle turn aside
To prate of "poise" and "dignity" and "pride."
And you and I, perhaps, we marvel, too—
Deeming it rather bold, as others do.
And asking if such love can worthy be
Which flaunts itself for all the world to see.

How laughable are we! As if this pair
Had sight or sense of any others there!
As if the kingdom in their hearts unfurled
Had sound or knowledge of another world!
Her laugh, her look, her shy upturning lashes,
The girlish fingers toying with her sashes—
And all the tides of life are turned for him
Who loves a maiden, starry-eyed and slim.
Upon her smile a thousand questions wait,
The myriad Future pivots on his fate.

And you and I and other folk may tell
How "out of taste" is public spooning. Well,
Whether we like it matters not one whit!
A wiser Mind than ours is over it.
Empires are builded by it, and the vast
Revolving scheme wherein our lot is cast.
Cynic, revise your word, or Life will turn
Your soul to cinders, for her ways are stern.
Lovers, we bless you, leaning face to face.
You are the living world, the coming race!

PETALS

(A LOVE STORY)

Call me Petals-Under-The-Moon,
Brave of mine returning soon —
Sing me a soft and curling tune.
Many men have called me fair,
Two there were who stroked my hair;
None like you beneath the moon
Call me Petals dusk with June.

None have said: "O cool as cream,
Gentle as a lady's dream —
So your cheek to mine doth seem!"
Soft magnolia petals pure,
Silver in the night's allure;
Saffron petals burning red
Hearing what my lover said.

Silver Moon has petals fine,
Creamy petals — how they shine! —
Covering his heart and mine.
Call me Petals-Of-The-Moon,
Silver petals, dropping soon,
Slipping from their azure stalk,
Showering the garden walk . . .

Call me Petals — call, call!
Love is life and life is all.
Ah, how swift the petals fall!
Fringe of petals weak and torn
Flying in the wind forlorn,
Froth of petals coldly white
Whirling in the storm at night.

Call me petals scattered wide —
I who loved none else beside,
I who should have been your bride . . .

You who came to me in June,
Sat beside me in the moon . . .
Oh, the name is sweet, sweet . . .
I am Petals at your feet!

CONSOLATION

The gods have prepared a love better for you, my dear,
As you weep in the dusk for the lover who is not here —
Oh, he loved in the heedless, bitter-swift way of man,
Left you adrift as only the faithless can . . .
But the gods are glad, and why should your lips bemoan?
Look where their torches beckon you on to your own!

The Fates have designed a more beautiful life for your soul,
As you sigh for the broken dream and the vanished goal;
As you grieve for the shattered hopes of the futile years —
Oh, pang in the night, when the pillow is damp with tears! —
But the gods are glad, for they see with vision true
The higher goals, the lovelier dreams that belong to you!

LOVE'S RESURRECTION

If it be true the dead shall rise again
As holy writ hath said;
If it be true that all the pulseless men
Who now, we ignorantly say, are dead
Shall one day rise . . .
Then, dearest, shall we not within that hour
Regain our Paradise?

We two who loved and saw love die at last,
Though fondly we did fan his lungs to power;
We two who sadly speak of love as past . . .
Oh, may we not on Resurrection morn
Behold again the light within his eyes,
And you be glad of me, and I of you?
O lover, if the dead may rise again;
If moldy graves may bloom with living men,
May not our love be resurrected, too?

RECONCILIATION

Now you have come to share with me
The moon's first look through the cypress tree;
Books and letters and daily bread,
With dreams like halos overhead—
Now you have come, I dare not say
What hells I've crossed with you away.

LOVE VICTORIOUS

I called you, but you did not come.
Out of the Void where the heart is driven,
Baffled and worn with love ungiven,
Across the darkness that is hung
With curtains of unuttered speech,
With prayers unheard and dreams unsung
As far as human thought may reach,
I called you till my lips were numb;
I called you, but you answered not.
What magic hath my soul forgot,
What rhythm of the heart's refrain,
That I should call to you in vain?

Dear, I called, and you did not heed me.
Now I answer another call. . . .
Swift I go where the soul would lead me,
Over the fields where the stricken fall.
I, the giver, no more shall plead;
Sad no longer, though still unmated,
Love shall answer the larger need,
Blessing the hearts that long have waited.
Love, the dreamer, shall live again,
Blooming fair in the souls of men.
Love, the seeker, new worlds shall find,
Pouring its wealth on all mankind.

LOVE'S ORDERS

Go! Follow Love's high orders
Whose goals are great and far.
She scorns the narrow borders
Where your selfish sorrows are.
Go, follow Love the spirit
Whose feet are like the wind,
Nor challenge fate nor fear it,
But leave the husk behind.

Her purity shall smite them
Whose fortresses are built
Where wicked men delight them
In crimson ways of guilt.
Go, follow Love the crier
Above the cruel town!
Her bugle, touched with fire
Shall bring their armies down.

Go! Be yourselves the recompense
Who grieve for Love's reply,
Your lives the shining evidence
Writ large upon the sky.

And wrought upon the golden earth
 Where gods and men may see,
The promise of a fairer birth
 For those who follow me.

Section XXII

TOWN

I AM GLAD OF THE CITY

I am glad of the city!
I am glad of the spume and spray
Of the tossing, terrible city.
My body a speck in the sea of enormous emotion,
My soul is big, big as the city's ocean!
I am one with the crash and roar of its heaving tides,
My body a boat that rides and rides and rides. . . .

I am full of the city!
I am full of the hum and cry of the passionate city.
My arms are wide as the flowing tide of its rivers,
I am its myriad marts where commerce quivers;
I am its honeycomb of tangled streets and wires,
I am the lifted glory of its spires.

I am full of the city,
I am full of the colors and crowds of the wonderful city;
My body's temperate pulse lost long ago,
My soul has found a fiercer pulse within the flow
Of arteries where human creatures meet
In splendid fellowship along the street!
I and the golden city have become as one. . . .
I was the city's own before the city was begun.

JOURNEYS

(THOUGHTS IN A MOTOR CAR AMID THE JAM OF TRAFFIC)

We are all taking journeys
To utter the moods of the body, the wish of the soul. . . .
We are all moving on to some goal —
Valley or mountain, cavern, cliff or sea,
Whatever the aim may be,
We are all taking journeys.

Caught in the river of traffic, the tides of the street,
Halted and held for a thought-bestirring space,
The startled eyes of strangers lift and meet. . . .
Yet none of us are strangers in this place.
How close we are, how intimate,
Here in the crush of vehicles that wait
Impatiently for signals that shall send
Each steaming horse or motor to its own end!

The forward-reaching nostrils of the country mare
Graze the back of the limousine
Where lolls the millionaire.
The huge unwieldy truck where workmen sit
Is wedged in front of it,
And horses' hoofs go clack, clack,
Almost upon my back.

How strange that we should all be going, going,
A ceaseless tide of vehicles forever flowing,
So near and yet so terribly apart
That though I seem to look into your heart—
O woman with the sad eyes and cherry lips—
And though I almost touch the finger tips
Of children smiling at me from the street,
I know that never, never shall we meet. . . .
For all of us are journeying, and few may know
Where others go!

We are all taking journeys,
To utter the will of the spirit, the faith of the soul. . . .
We are all moving on to some goal.
You to the crowded city, I to the sea;
O stranger, comrade! Look once more on me. . . .
We are all taking journeys!

THE SOUL OF THE CITY

When the soul of the city comes back to town
 The days are crowded and rich and sweet
And the sparkling throng goes up and down
 And up and down the street.

When the soul of the city is far away
 In camp and cottage along the shore
And Summer is beckoning every day
 For more and more and more. . . .

Oh, the empty look in the city's face
 Where boarded windows front the park;
Oh, the hollow cheer in every place
 From heated morn till dark!

Though the stranger folk from far and near
 Come drifting through with an eager air;
Though the Summer dawn is red and clear
 And Summer girls are fair . . .

There's a dusty look and a lonely sound
 Wherever I go, whatever I see;
Why, even the old familiar ground
 Seems somehow strange to me!

But oh, when the folks come homing back
 And the shops are full and the street's athrill,
And the traffic guard is on the track
 To save your life against your will;

When the restaurants are jammed and gay
 And theatre crowds must stand in line,
I know that Autumn is on the way
 And the dear old town is mine!

THE STEAM SHOVEL

(Being the reflections of a distressed mortal whose apartment adjoins the vacant lot where men are excavating, preparatory to building)

From out the calm of my domain
I look and strive as best I can
To fathom why such stress and pain
Accompany the works of man.
With due respect his deeds I scan,
With reverence I homage pay
To road and bridge and spire and dome . . .
Yet she who works within the home
Must move like velvet on her way!

From out the quiet and the poise
Of dainty nook and silken room
I marvel at the steam and noise,
The roar, the crash, the shriek, the boom —
The clouds of dirt and smoke that loom
Like flapping Fate across the sun . . .
Oh, pardon, lords of earth, I pray!
But is there then no other way,
I humbly ask, to get things done?

THE CITY CHILD IN SUMMER

In a city full of broiling stones and asphalt,
A little child cherished a piece of ground —
Out of the desert, this pathetic oasis,
A bit of dirt about a tree he found.

With tiny pail for sand, and valiant shovel
He burrowed patiently — a sturdy lad
Who panted for the soil and meant to find it,
Though dust and stones were all the earth he had.

His wilted mother, seated close beside him,
Struggled to sew, but could not for the heat . . .
The tree was hot, the shade was hot, the sun
Was like a brazen hammer upon the street.

I thought of cooling gardens, lovely hills,
Delicious green of lawns in the afternoon;
Larkspur and lilies, peonies and clover,
And daisy fields like snow beneath the moon.

I thought of crystal beaches, where the dawn
Is like a rainbow spanning all the sea;
I thought of children romping in the waters
With silver shouts of glee.

In a city full of baking stones and asphalt,
I shall not dare to meet the children's eyes;
Always a question looks from their hot faces . . .
How long, how long shall we give them vain replies?

THE LUNGS OF THE CITY

City, you are many-celled and mighty;
You, with your furnaces, your chimneys, your gas tanks,
Your river beds, your depths where intricate machinery moves;
I hear you in the night, you roar upon me in the daytime;
You are an avalanche of devastating noise
When I would rest and retire into myself.
But more impassioned than your noise of train and motor,
And vehement with purposes impossible to stem,
The panting of the multitudes, their breathing. . . .

One morning, waking suddenly before the sun was up,
Lying with my windows open, aware of many other windows,

I seemed to hear the whirring of the city's mighty lungs,
I heard the tremendous rhythm of human inhalations.
In tier upon tier of common habitations,
People were breathing.
In spacious dwellings, where pictures gleamed
Through satin-swathed and lace-hung windows,
People were breathing.
In the unmentionable places,
In dens and dives and alleyways,
People were breathing.
Against the purity of mother-bosoms,
Tiny babes were drawing the ecstasy of life. . . .
O city, you are a mammoth breathing thing,
And back of you there is a wonder, there is a miracle,
There is a Power ineffable that pumps the divine elixir
Into the million, million lungs;
Inhaling, exhaling, with never-ending rhythm.
There is a Something back of you, too marvelous to name.
Who dares to say there is no God,
Who dares to doubt Eternity,
When all about us, behind the windows,
People are breathing, breathing, breathing!

CITY, REPLY!

"Yes, sir!" The old Vermonter shook his head —
He was the oldest citizen, they said —
"I tell you what, the city's got us beat.
There ain't no use in tryin' to compete.
Time was when all that space that's covered over
With weeds an' buttercups an' common clover
Was givin' crops for man an' beast an' child,
But now, you see . . . they've got us growin' wild.
They've throttled us. I tell you what," said he,
"There's nothin' here like what it used to be."

A wrinkled, ripe, intelligent old man
Living with patience his remaining span;
A Voice of protest, lifted clear and high;
A Challenge that would wait its true reply.
"Deserted farms!" said he. "That tells it all.
The young men's all a-list'nin' for that call." . . .
We knew what call he meant. Along the track
To fevered thoroughfares our minds went back;
We saw the speed and glamour of the town . . .
"The curse," he said, "that's brought the country down."

A deep resentment burned within his gaze,
As though he marveled at life's fickle ways.
A feeble man — past ninety — yet as spry
And steady at his trade as you or I.
"The city calls 'em. That's the reason pat.
And what's the city got? Just answer that!
Why, look around!" said he, and waved his hand,
His eager gesture circling all the land.
And we who gazed on velvet hills of green
With gushing rivers glittering between,
We wondered, too, if lads who go from this
Have any vision of the things they miss.

"Yes, sir. Deserted farms — that tells the tale.
I allus knew this town was bound to fail
Just soon's I saw how restless boys can be
A-hankerin' for other sights to see.
My Bob, he was the first to go. Then Jim.
Of course the others followed after him . . .
I wish you'd seen us fifty years ago.
This place was flourishin' I'd have you know.
But now" . . . He took his stick and went his way.
"I wish you'd seen the roads . . . no ruts like these.
Why, everything was perfect as you please —
But now . . . well, you can see it for yourself."

Answer, O city, with your thousand charms . . .
What lure is this that leads them to your arms?
What magic has the countryside forgot,
What secret have you learned that she has not?
I gaze upon the blessèd country sky,
And with the old Vermonter, question: "Why?"

Section XXIII

WORK AND TRIUMPH

WE NEED OUR TASKS

"The world is too much with us," yea, and yet
Were't not for these stern tasks o'er which we fret
Our spirits would grow flabby, weak and pale,
And Nature's highest purpose in us fail.
Our days would pall with not enough to do,
Were Life's demands too few.

"The world is too much with us" — yet, forsooth,
Did grumbling, weary mortals know the truth,
The prod and passion of our life's unrest,
The steam and fury of our daily quest,
The pain we conquer with the sturdy mind —
All these are needed training for mankind.

The plastic brain awaits the will's control
To make of it a many-fibered whole.
The tease and torment of unruly things,
The whir and whine of little frets and stings,
The tyrannies of life, are each to fit
Into the intricate, round scheme of it.

Even the wrench of Fate that would deny
The frenzied soul immediate reply;
The taunt of interruptions that would make
Misfortune of the tasks we undertake. . . .
All these are good for him whose will comes back
Over again across the broken track.

A Mind above us keeps the path we go,
The Spirit worketh greater than we know.
And could we lift our vision to that sphere,
The tragedies of life would all be clear.
The athlete needs his toil and training bars,
And we our tasks, if we would win the stars!

A CALL TO GENIUS

Why should the grim who have no good to say
Seek to destroy the genius of to-day?
Why should the bored or envious declare
Their bitter war on talents everywhere,
Denying help to those who seek to climb?
Who says there is no genius in our time?
Let him but look about with open gaze
To see the amazing vision of our days.

Oh, surely hath the city done her part
To spur the soul enamored of its art!
Here mid the sting and hunger of the quest,
The burst of glowing talent long suppressed,
The myriad thrusts of cleverness that tell
Of greater things for him who worketh well,
I am astonished at my fellow kind!
The leap of ardor and the play of mind,
The steady pulse of purpose driving still
The fiery chariot of the enchanted will.

In home or hall or class or artist's den
I look about on women, girls and men;
Each flies a talent like a roseate banner,
Each has a thing to do in his own manner;
While through the rich bewildering array
It seems as if I heard the Creator say:
"Behold my precious pattern in each one—
Behold my daughter and behold my son!"
Go forth, my friend, and answer your high call.
Here in God's universe is room for all!

WORK

(A SONG OF TRIUMPH)

Work!
Thank God for the might of it,
The ardor, the urge, the delight of it —
Work that springs from the heart's desire,
Setting the brain and the soul on fire —
Oh, what is so good as the heat of it,
And what is so glad as the beat of it,
And what is so kind as the stern command,
Challenging brain and heart and hand?

Work!
Thank God for the pride of it,
For the beautiful, conquering tide of it,
Sweeping the life in its furious flood,
Thrilling the arteries, cleansing the blood,
Mastering stupor and dull despair,
Moving the dreamer to do and dare.
Oh, what is so good as the urge of it,
And what is so glad as the surge of it,
And what is so strong as the summons deep,
Rousing the torpid soul from sleep?

Work!
Thank God for the pace of it,
For the terrible, keen, swift race of it;
Fiery steeds in full control,
Nostrils aquiver to greet the goal.
Work, the Power that drives behind,
Guiding the purposes, taming the mind,
Holding the runaway wishes back,
Reining the will to one steady track,
Speeding the energies faster, faster,
Triumphing over disaster.

Oh, what is so good as the pain of it,
And what is so great as the gain of it?
And what is so kind as the cruel goad,
Forcing us on through the rugged road?

Work!
Thank God for the swing of it,
For the clamoring, hammering ring of it,
Passion of labor daily hurled
On the mighty anvils of the world.
Oh, what is so fierce as the flame of it?
And what is so huge as the aim of it?
Thundering on through dearth and doubt,
Calling the plan of the Maker out.
Work, the Titan; Work, the friend,
Shaping the earth to a glorious end,
Draining the swamps and blasting the hills,
Doing whatever the Spirit wills —
Rending a continent apart,
To answer the dream of the Master heart.
Thank God for a world where none may shirk —
Thank God for the splendor of work!

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BEHOLD, MY KINGS!

(A SONG OF DEMOCRACY)

In the arrogant ages of mighty, magnificent things,
When the heart of the Lord was aglow with the making of kings —
Pharaoh, David, Manasseh, Jehoram and Saul;
Nebuchadnezzar, with lackeys to leap at his call;
Nero, Tiberius Cæsar — all of the great
Who thunder through history's gate —
Said the Lord: "I have need of obedient servants the more;
Like the tides of my body, the myriad people shall pour.

Yea, scarlet and ebony, amber and white shall they stream,
For the earth must be tilled and made ready to answer
my dream."

Then swarming like ants out of chaos to follow His plan,
These nimble new mortals came forth in the image of
man.
They came — and the Pyramids rose in the grandeur of
space.
They came — and the great Colosseum stood forth in its
place.
Yea, throne and cathedral, pavilion and palace and dome,
These were their task, to make ready for kings who should
come . . .
But the soul of Jehovah grew heavy with grief and disgust
When He saw how the lives of His kings were the language
of lust,
Moving majestic and sinister, age upon age,
Trail of the dragon defiling humanity's page.

In the terrible ages of cruel, incredible things,
When the pride of Jehovah was mirrored in chapters of
kings;
In the eloquent age when the mind of creation was stirred
Hugely to hurl into being a sumptuous word,
Came the wail of the people who toiled that the rulers be
fed,
Came the cry of the nations who lavished their labor for
bread.
"Lo, these are my servants, who love and who nourish
my sod,
Lo, these are my patient, obedient people," quoth God.
But the groans of the people rose up to His ears in the
night,
And the *minds* of His people rose triumphing into the
light!

They toiled and a mighty new continent came into place.
They toiled and behold, there was forming a rugged new race.
And harbors and tunnels and highways grew great in the land
Whose wealth and whose grain was the beautiful work of their hand.
Then Truth like a blaze out of Heaven illumined the skies,
And His dream in the freshness of morning looked out of God's eyes.
"Behold, by the doing of harsh, multitudinous things,
These have become my kings.
Behold, by the doing of mighty magnificent things,
My people are more than kings!"




H Ridgeway